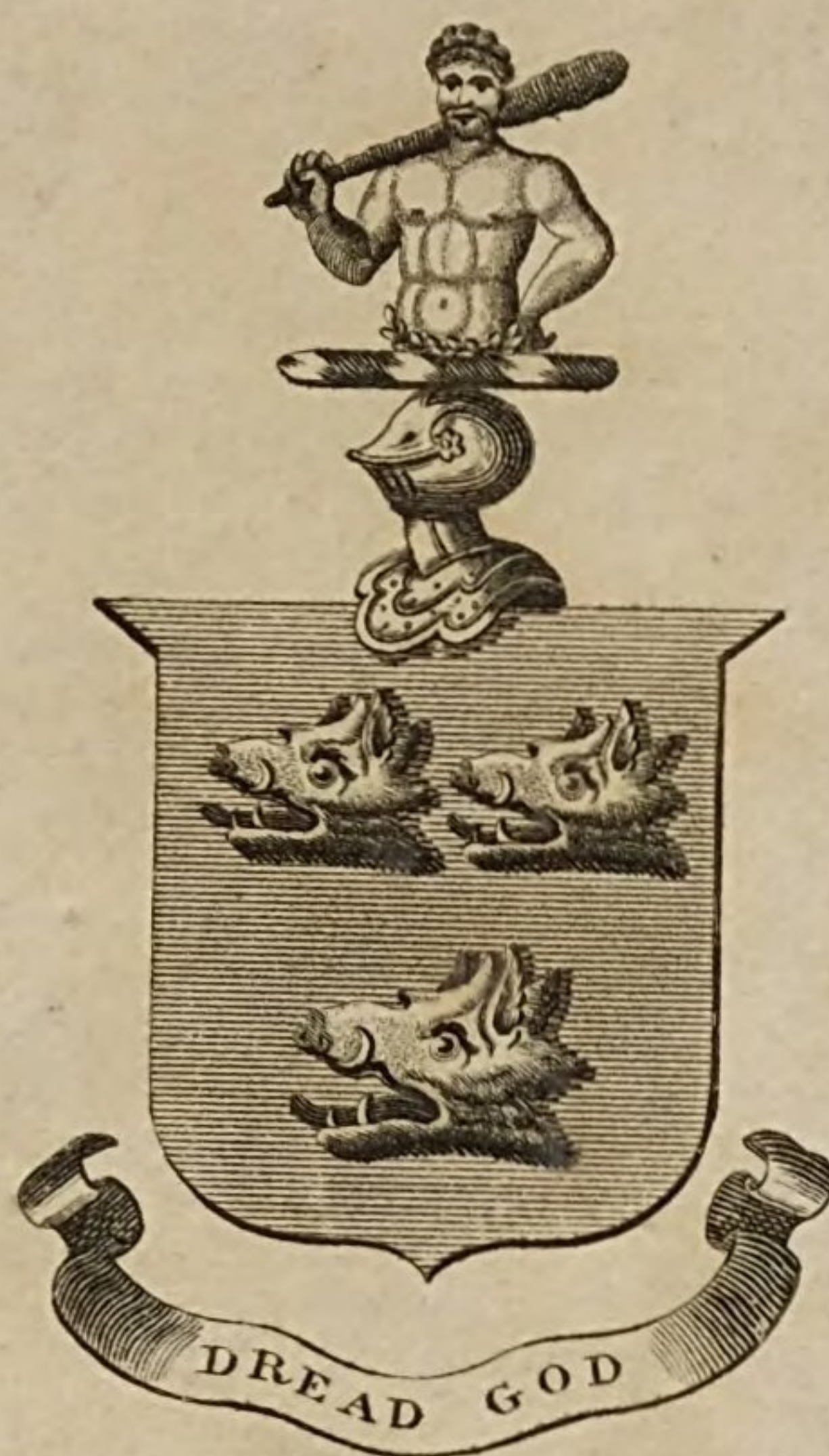




CAPT.^N GORDON,
Royal Navy.

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A
POPULAR COMMENTARY ON THE BIBLE,

IN A SERIES OF

SERMONS,

FOLLOWING, IN

THE OLD TESTAMENT,

THE COURSE OF

THE FIRST LESSONS

AT MORNING AND EVENING SERVICE ON SUNDAYS.

DESIGNED FOR

Parish Churches,

OR FOR

READING IN PRIVATE FAMILIES.

BY

JAMES PLUMPTRE, B.D.

VICAR OF GREAT GRANSDEN, HUNTINGDONSHIRE,

HONORARY MEMBER OF THE LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY OF SHEFFIELD AND FORMERLY
FELLOW OF CLARE HALL, CAMBRIDGE.

What the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak. 1 KINGS xxii. 14.

Thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will
forbear. EZEKIEL ii. 7.

Every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that
is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.

MATTHEW xiii. 52.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR C. AND J. RIVINGTON,

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AND WATERLOO-PLACE, PALL-MALL.

1827.

POPULAR COMMENTARY ON THE BIBLE.

SERMONS.

IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

THE FIRST LESSONS.

AT MORNING AND EVENING PRAYER ON SUNDAYS.

By James Chubb.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY R. GILBERT,

ST. JOHN'S SQUARE.



IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR C. AND J. RIVINGTON,

ST. MARTIN'S LANE.

AND T. B. SPENCER, ST. MARK'S LANE.

1827.

TO THE
RIGHT REV. JOHN KAYE, D.D.

BY DIVINE PERMISSION,

LORD BISHOP OF LINCOLN,

This Attempt

OF A

PLAIN PARISH PRIEST IN HIS LORDSHIP'S DIOCESE TO RENDER THE HOLY SCRIPTURES MORE
INTELLIGIBLE AND MORE INTERESTING TO THE MOST HUMBLE OF HIS FLOCK,

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY HIS LORDSHIP'S MOST OBEDIENT AND

DEVOTED HUMBLE SERVANT,

JAMES PLUMPTRE.

GREAT GRANSDEN VICARAGE,
February 26, 1827.

PREFACE.

It is some years since the first idea of the following Commentary occurred to the mind of the author. It was in consequence of his reading the second part of Paine's *Age of Reason*; with which, however he had first become acquainted by reading, some few years previous, Bishop Watson's answer to it, entitled *An Apology for the Bible*.

Another step towards it was the author's meeting with the following passages in Dr. Johnson's *Prayers and Meditations*, in the year 1802, or 1803:

“EASTER EVE, April 18, 1772.

“I resolved, last Easter, to read within the year, the whole Bible, a very great part of which I had never looked upon. I read the Greek Testament without construing, and this day concluded the Apocalypse. I think that no part was missed.”

Again, “April 26, 1772,” he says,

“It is a comfort to me, that at last, in my sixty-third year, I have attained to know, even thus hastily, confusedly, and imperfectly, what my Bible contains.”

The author was much struck with this confession of Dr. Johnson, and it occurred to him, that, though he was only about half the age which Dr. J. was when he made this self-accusation, yet he was very

much in the same predicament ; for, though he had been instructed in his Bible from his earliest years, yet there were many parts of it he had never read, though he had read Fleetwood's History of the Bible through when preparing for Ordination. He made a resolution, therefore, that he would, not only read his Bible over once, but often, and in different forms. This, he is happy to say, he has, in great measure, fulfilled ; but Orton's Exposition of the Old Testament, and Doddridge's Family Expositor of the New, have been his most constant and favourite reading. At this time, the author was resident at Hinxton, in Cambridgeshire, as Sequestrator of the vicarage ; but, the Great Seals being taken out, by the present Vicar, in the year 1805, he was obliged to quit it, which he did at Michaelmas in that year.

From that time, till Lady Day 1812, when the author came to Gransden, he had no parochial charge. In the mean time, or, rather, just previous to his quitting Hinxton, the British and Foreign Bible Society was established ; and it increased, by a vigorous growth, till, by its Auxiliaries and Branches, it reached the University of Cambridge, and even the remote situation of Gransden.

It is the fundamental principle of the Bible Society, that the Bibles which it distributes shall be "the authorized Version without Note or Comment." And, indeed, a Society, consisting of Churchmen and Dissenters of almost all denominations, could not subsist upon any other terms. But, though such was the basis of union ; yet it was by no means

implied, that persons of all denominations thought that the Bible did not want any Note or Comment ; but merely that, so far as they acted together, as a Society, no Note or Comment was to be given. When the Bibles were obtained and distributed, each one was to go on still in his own way, preaching, expounding, and commenting ; and the author felt, that, the more he distributed the Bible in his parish, the more some commentary was wanting ; and especially at the time when so much pains was taken in the kingdom to vilify the Scriptures and disperse infidel Tracts. Besides this, he considered, that, however regular any of his parishioners might be in their attendance at church and upon the Word preached, still,—if they could not, or, if they did not, read at home,—the mere stated routine of the Sunday Lessons, and the generally desultory mode of selecting texts for sermons, would give them but a very inadequate idea of *THE BIBLE as a whole*, and of its general contents and tendency.

The secular concerns, almost necessarily attending upon the coming into a parish in which there had been no resident Vicar for many years, the repairing an uninhabitable house, the settling of tithes and rates, the protracted vexations of a thirteen years inclosure in the neighbouring parish, where a part of the vicarage property is situated, and, above all, the agricultural distress, and the being obliged to farm his own glebe, were powerful obstacles in the way of such a work.

At length, in the ecclesiastical year 1823—1824,

in his arrangements for his reading for the year, he took Wogan's Essay on the Proper Lessons as the book for his Sunday reading : and, at the same time, for his reading in the week, had Mr. Horne's Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures. These two books together soon revived the author's ideas of a set of expository sermons, and he resolved, that,—with the blessing of God,—he would, on Septuagesima Sunday, in the next year, (1825) after some introductory discourses, begin the Bible, dwelling chiefly on the Sunday Lessons, but noticing such chapters and books as were passed over between ; so that, when Septuagesima came again, he should have gone through the whole Old Testament, in, perhaps, as convenient a manner as could be done from the pulpit ; and so as to give his hearers a general idea of the Bible, and a greater interest in it, and more reverence and love for it, bringing it home to “their business and their bosoms,”—to their consciences.

In all congregations, however, and especially in a country congregation, there is a variety of tastes, and feelings, and intellects, to be considered. The gentleman's family at the head of the parish are to be informed, and not disgusted ; and the meanest capacity stands most in need of instruction, and *that* intelligible to its unrefined, and, often, gross, ideas. Between these widely-opposite extremes, a minister of the Gospel has an arduous and an awful charge to fulfil. Indeed to find an exact medium between the two, at all times, and in all cases, seems to be

impracticable ; there must be times when the informed and the refined must acquiesce in hearing *that*, which is, to them, trite and low ; and console themselves with the idea, that it is, nevertheless, profitable for their lower brethren, and those of mean capacities ; and those with little knowledge, must be content sometimes to sit and hear *that*, which is altogether above their comprehension.

In the execution of his work the author made use chiefly of Orton's Exposition, as being, not only his favourite work, but as being most suited to his purpose, having been drawn up originally for reading to a congregation. He began too by consulting Gray's Key to the Old Testament, and Bishop Tomline's Introduction to the Bible, in his Elements of Christian Theology ; but he soon found, that Mr. Horne, by his own researches, had saved him much labour, and smoothed the way before him. To this gentleman he returns his most cordial thanks. He has rendered most important service to the Church. By his own immense labour and taste, he has shortened the labours of others, and rendered even dry subjects interesting and amusing. There are few clergymen who will not be their own enemies, if they neglect to possess themselves of his invaluable work.

Wogan's Essay on the Proper Lessons the author has already mentioned : and he found in his library another valuable work, with the merits of which he had not hitherto become acquainted ; this was Sermons preached out of the First Lessons at Morning and Evening Prayer, for all Sundays in

the year, by William Reading, M.A., Keeper of the Library at Sion College, in 4 vols. 8vo. For this work, with many others, the author had been indebted to a much-valued friend deceased, who had left them as a Legacy; and they had remained upon his shelves, to be brought into reading at some time; and, now, that time arrived, and he found them of considerable use. He always read the Sermons on the Sunday Lessons previous to his writing his own.

The author is concerned that he feels it necessary to vindicate the character of Orton in this place, for he has, more than once, on mentioning his name to friends, been asked whether Orton was not a Socinian, or an Arian? The author thinks that the Exposition bears very satisfactory evidence to the contrary. A few passages shall be adduced in confirmation.

On Genesis i. 26, he says, “And God said, *speaking to his son, or spirit, or both, or his attendant angels*, Let us make man in our image.”

On Genesis iii. 14, 15, the curse upon the serpent, he says, in a note *, “*Thy seed and her seed may*”—“mean, as many think, the righteous and the wicked, or (which sense I much prefer) the Lord Jesus Christ, the great Messiah, the Captain of Salvation. He, that eminent Person, shall bruise thy head, destroy thy power, and thou shalt bruise his heel; he shall receive some slight hurt in the contest; which may refer to the sufferings of the

* Vol. I. p. 17.

Messiah endured for our salvation." And, in the Reflections, at the end of the chapter, he says, (p.19.)

"Let us adore that mercy which pointed out the Lord Jesus Christ. That God so graciously revived the drooping hearts of his fallen creatures by this early intimation of mercy, and provided so richly for the comfort of succeeding generations, that, while feeling the effects of sin, they might look to Christ. By faith in this promise the holy men of old bore up under their imperfections and distresses. We have particular reason to be thankful that Christ was manifested in the flesh, that as the children whom he came to save were partakers of flesh and blood, he also partook of the same. Blessed be God for Jesus Christ! This second man is the Lord from heaven, who restores those blessings which our first father lost, and brings greater and nobler along with him. Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift!"

Again, Isaiah vii. 14. * :

"Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel; *an illustrious prophecy of Christ.*" And, in the Reflections, (p. 181.),

"Let us bless God that this sign is come to pass, and that this glorious prophecy of Christ is fulfilled! He was born of the Virgin Mary, his name was called Immanuel. God is with us, dwelling in human nature, and at peace with us. We should thankfully receive him as the Messiah, who is to

* Vol. V. p. 179.

reign over the house of David, and whose kingdom is everlasting. We should diligently seek an interest in him, and all lesser deliverances should lead our thoughts to this great deliverer, who is God's salvation to the ends of the earth."

Isaiah ix. 6. (p. 187.)

"His name shall be called, *that is, he shall be the Wonderful, Counsellor, acquainted with the counsels of God, so as to reveal the most important truths to men*, The mighty God, the everlasting Father, *the great almighty governor, and the father of the ages, or the dispensations to come, and the Prince of Peace.*"

In the Reflections, he says, (p. 190.)

"A glorious idea is here given us of the person, offices, and government of Christ, which it is proper and comfortable to reflect upon. He is wonderful in his person and offices; a counsellor, as he discovers the most important truths, and the gracious purposes of God; a mighty God, able to save unto the uttermost; the father of the age, the greatest friend and benefactor to it; and he is the prince of peace, whose administration is righteous, peaceful, and happy; and whatever opposition may be made to it, it shall increase and prosper, till it terminates in everlasting glory; *of his government and peace there shall be no end.* Let us reverence this glorious prince, and magnify the Lord of Hosts, whose pity, love, and zeal have performed all this for us."

The author conceives these passages to be abundantly satisfactory as to Orton's belief in the pre-existence and Deity of Christ.

In treating objections which have been made, and difficulties which have been started, against various particulars in the Bible, the author has studied more to meet them in the way of exposition, than in formally stating the objections, and answering them.

In going, thus, carefully, through the Old Testament, the author has been confirmed in an idea which he has long held, that a *new translation*, or at least a careful revision of our present one, is a most desirable measure. It is very irksome to the preacher to have constantly to be speaking of mistranslations and mis-arrangements. And it seems to imply a censure on the original translators, and a heavier one on the present heads of the Church, who, being aware of the many errors in it, and having the means of correcting them, yet, either from indolence or fear, persevere in retaining them. We may explain to our congregations, that the imprecations in the Psalms are *declarations*, and not *denunciations*, or *wishes*, of evil; but such an explanatory sermon, even if repeated more than once, will be heard by few, comparatively, of the population of a parish, and will be understood and remembered by still fewer; while the delivery of the curses, as often as they occur, will accord with the malevolence of many a heart from the high to the low. There are, also, many expressions in our Bible, which, though they might not be low and coarse at the time our translation was made, yet, certainly, are so *now*; and such as a minister can neither repeat, nor alter, without reluctance.

God, no doubt, gave his Word perfect, as he created man: but it has participated of the imperfections of the world in which it has so long abided. It should be the care of his representatives on earth to endeavour to restore it. The aids and assistances to this work are ample, and the people are sufficiently enlightened to avail themselves of a revised Bible.

Dr. Doddridge, in the Preface to his Family Expositor, speaking of his own new version of the New Testament, says, that it has raised some of those ornaments which were before depressed, and has sufficiently proved, that several objections urged against Scripture “were entirely of *English* growth: ends which might yet more abundantly be answered by a *new version* of the *Old Testament*, which has suffered much more in *our translation*, as it is natural to suppose it must.”

Dr. Greenwood, in the Preface to his Harmony of the Evangelists; or the Four Gospels connected into one regular Historical Series, 12mo. 1765, a work, till lately, on the List of Books dispersed by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and now on their List of Books out of print, says,

“I have”—“ventured to alter in some places the common translation; I hope not for the worse: which may serve till our governors shall think it a proper time to give us a better; a work much wanted and desired.”

Such have been the Author's motives in the undertaking of this work. And, what he has deemed desirable for his own parish, he thinks may

be of advantage to others, and to families where there is reading and prayer of an evening, and especially on Sunday evenings. How he has executed this portion of his task, the public will now determine. He will not disguise that he feels much anxiety and apprehension, when he considers the difficulty of the task, and the variety of tastes and opinions which it will have to encounter.

“If we preach plainly,” says Bishop Hall, in his *Contemplation on the dumb devil ejected**, “to some it will savour of a careless slubbering, to others of a mortified sincerity; elaborately, some will tax our affectation, others will applaud our diligence in dressing the delicate viands of God. What marvel is it, if it be thus with our imperfection, when it fared not otherwise with him, that was purity and righteousness itself?”

Had the Author found such a work already executed to his hands, he would have adopted that; and should not have attempted it himself. And, should this effort set any one upon executing a similar plan in a different and better way, he himself will be among the first to adopt it. The Author makes no pretensions to learning and deep research; all that he has attempted is, to put such materials as his reading had already furnished him with, and such as he had at hand, into a form proper for delivery from the pulpit, and applicable to his own congregation. Nor was the work began and continued without Prayer to HIM without whose assistance every undertaking is vanity.

* Works, Vol. II. p. 265.

Of the farther progress of this work, the Author, on mature deliberation, determined to take the four Gospels in the manner of a *Harmony*, or united History of the Life of Jesus Christ. And, in this, he again judged it best to follow the course of the Church, and, after two Introductory Discourses, to begin on Advent Sunday, taking the Nativity on Christmas Day, the Crucifixion on Good Friday, the Resurrection on Easter Day, and the Ascension the Sunday after Ascension Day; and taking the remainder of the year to the Acts of the Apostles, and the Epistles, and Revelation; making in all about the same number of Sermons as are contained in these Volumes.

When these are completed the author purposes (as he has stated Sermon 37, Vol. II. p. 51) to go back to some of those books in the Old Testament, from which there are no Sunday Lesson, and which were, therefore, only slightly noticed before. These are the book of Job, the Psalms, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon; and, when the work shall be thus completed, the proper order of the different parts would then be, The Old Testament Sermons, from Septuagesima, till Septuagesima came again*, then those on the books above mentioned, till the following Advent; and, then, those on the New Testament; thus making up a Course for about *Three Years*, a period of some duration, and longer

* When there were more Sundays in the Calendar with Lessons for them, than occurred in the year in which the author delivered them, he has made up the number by preaching two on some Sunday, or Sundays, previous, or subsequent.

than any minister can expect to retain a congregation which is always fluctuating; but yet as short a time, perhaps, as will suffice for saying any thing effective upon the subject. Few will hear them all. The object must be, that what are heard by any "may minister grace unto the hearers." (Eph. iv. 29.)

The author will not omit this opportunity, lest another should not occur, of returning his most cordial thanks to the Rev. George Townsend for his invaluable Chronological Arrangements of the Old and New Testament. The first of these the author could not procure, it being out of print, till after he had completed these Sermons*; but his New Testament has been in his hands upwards of a year, and is continually open before him, and has saved him, he judges, nearly half his labour. Mr. Townsend's Works should take their stand by Mr. Horne's volumes in the library of every theologian.

Nor must the author close this Preface without expressing his gratitude to that Supreme Being who has supported him through his more-than-usual labour, and given him health and strength, and a willing mind to make his labour a delight. And he prays for a continuance of these, that he may be enabled to finish his work with joy, and

* The author became possessed of D'Oyly and Mant's Bible, and Scott's Bible, and also the last edition of Calmet's Dictionary, by Taylor, before he had completed the Old Testament, but not till it was too late to profit materially by them.

that it may, through his grace, be blessed to those who hear and those who read, for the sake of his dear Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, GOD BLESSED FOR EVER. Amen.

GREAT GRANSDEN VICARAGE,

February 26, 1827.

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when Ehud was dead. And the Lord sold them into the
hand of Jabin, king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor, the
captain of whose host was Sisera, which dwelt in Harosheth
of the Gentiles. And the children of Israel cried unto the
Lord: for he had nine hundred chariots of iron; and twenty
years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel 386

SERMON XXVI.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.—RUTH & 1 SAMUEL I—VIII. 3.

*Ruth—The Books of Samuel—Elkanah, Hannah and Samuel—Eli
and his Sons—Dagon, or Neptune—Samuel and his Sons.*

1 SAMUEL iii. 10.

And the Lord came, and stood, and called, as at other times,
Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak, for thy
servant heareth 403

SERMON XXVII.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.—1 SAMUEL VIII. 4.—XXXI.

*The Israelites reject Samuel—The Reign of Saul: Saul consults
Samuel—Anointed King—Saul's Sacrifice—His rash Curse—
Agag—David's Harp—His forbearance—The Death of Samuel
—The Witch of Endor—The Death of Saul.*

1 SAMUEL xii. 14, 15.

If ye will fear the Lord, and serve him, and obey his voice, and
not rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then shall

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both ye, and also the king that reigneth over you, continue following the Lord your God. But, if ye will *not* obey the voice of the Lord, but rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then shall the hand of the Lord be against you, as it was against your fathers 418

SERMON XXVIII.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.—1 SAMUEL XVI.—2 SAMUEL I.

The Character of David before he was King : The anointing of David—David and Goliath—David and Jonathan—Saul seeks David's ruin—David and Achish—His Marriages—His forbearance towards Saul—David, Nabal, and Abigail—David's second forbearance towards Saul—the Death of Saul and his Sons—The Lamentation of David—his forgiving Spirit.

1 SAMUEL xvii. 45.

Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield : But I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied 434

SERMON XXIX.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.—2 SAMUEL II.—1 KINGS II. 10.

The reign of David : The second Book of Samuel—Ishbosheth set up by Abner—David made King of all Israel—Brings up the Ark to Jerusalem—Purposes to build the Temple—Mephibosheth—David and Bathsheba—the people of Rabbah—Rebellion of Absalom—David numbers the people—The Character of David—a Type of Christ.

2 SAMUEL xii. 13.

And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord : And Nathan said unto David, The Lord, also, hath put away thy sin, thou shalt not die 450

SERMON XXX.

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.—1 KINGS II. 12.—XI.

The Reign of Solomon: The two Books of Kings—The first Book of Kings—Adonijah's attempt—Solomon's Marriage—his choice of Wisdom—His Judgment—The building of the Temple—Dedication—The Queen of Sheba—Solomon's apostacy—The Prince of Peace.

1 KINGS iii. 11—14.

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And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment; Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo! I have given thee a wise and understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. And I have, also, given thee that which thou hast *not* asked, both riches and honour: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days. And, if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days 466

SERMON XXXI.

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.—1 KINGS XI. 26.—XVII.

The separation of the Kingdom: Rehoboam, Jeroboam, and other Kings—The Disobedient Prophet—Rebuilding of Jericho—Elijah—fed by the Ravens—The Widow of Zarephath.

1 KINGS xiii. 2, 3.

And he cried against the altar in the word of the Lord, and said, O altar, altar, thus saith the Lord; Behold a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee. And he gave a sign the same day, saying, This is the sign which the Lord hath spoken; Behold, the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out 482

SERMON XXXII.

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.—1 KINGS XVIII—XX.

*Ahab and Elijah and the Priests of Baal—Jezebel—Elijah's flight
—God appears to Elijah—Elisha—Benhadad.*

1 KINGS xix. 11, 12.

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And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks, before the Lord ; but the Lord was not in the wind : and, after the wind, an earthquake : but the Lord was not in the earthquake : and, after the earthquake, a fire ; but the Lord was not in the fire ; and, after the fire, *a still small voice* 497

SERMON XXXIII.

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.—1 KINGS XXI, XXII.

Ahab and Naboth.—Jehoshaphat.

1 KINGS xxi. 17—19.

And the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel which is in Samaria ; behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to possess it. And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the Lord, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine . 511

A CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

OF THE

PRINCIPAL EVENTS RECORDED IN THE BIBLE.

COMPILED CHIEFLY FROM CALMET, SCOTT, AND HORNE.

This Table does not pretend to accuracy ; only to give some ideas of the dates, both general and relative. The compiler found both Scott and Horne (whose Table is founded on Archbishop Usher, and Calmet) at variance, not only with each other, but with themselves ; and had not leisure to attempt a more accurate one. A Chronological Table must be considered merely like the view, from an eminence, of a country through which a traveller is about to pass, or through which he has passed. He sees something like the relative situations and distances of different places ; but not the actual ; as he sees not the undulations of the road, the hills and the valleys which lie between.

The true date of the Birth of Christ is *four years before* the common æra, or A.D.

CHRONOLOGY TO VOLUME I. OF THIS WORK.

PERIOD I.

From the Creation to the Flood, 1656 years.

		Year of World	Before Christ.
Genesis i.	The Creation		4004
ii.	Our First Parents in Paradise.....		
iii.	Eve, tempted by the serpent, disobeys God, and persuades her husband Adam to disobedience also. The curse pro- nounced, the Redeemer promised, and Adam and Eve driven out of Paradise		
iv.	Cain born		
	Abel born.....		
	Cain kills his brother Abel, Cain having a wife and there being others in the world. v. 14, 17	129	3871
v. 3, 4	Seth born, when Adam his father is 130 years old	130	3870
6	Enos is born, Seth his father being 105 years old	235	3765
9	Cainan born, Enos his father being 90 years old	325	3675

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

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		Year of World.	Before Christ.
Genesis v. 12	Mahalaleel born, Cainan his father being 70 years old	395	3605
15	Jared born when Mahalaleel his father is 65 years old	460	3540
18, 19	Enoch born, Jared his father being 162 years old	622	3378
21, 22	Methuselah born, Enoch his father being 65 years old	687	3313
25	Lamech born, Methuselah his father being 187 years old	874	3126
4, 5	Adam dies, aged 930 years	930	3070
23, 24	Enoch is translated: he had lived 365 years	987	3013
7, 8	Seth dies, aged 912 years	1042	2958
28, 29	Noah born, Lamech being 182 years old	1056	2948
9—11	Enos dies, aged 905	1140	2860
13, 14	Cainan dies, aged 910	1235	2769
16, 17	Mahalaleel dies, aged 895	1290	2714
19, 20	Jared dies, aged 962	1422	2582
vi. 3—22	God threatens a flood, commissions Noah to preach repentance to mankind, (1 Pet. iii. 20. 2 Pet. ii. 5.) and to build an ark, 120 years previous	1536	2568
v. 32	Noah being 500 years old, his eldest son is born	1556	2448
30, 31	Lamech dies, aged 777, being the first who is recorded to have died a natural death before his father	1651	2352
26, 27	Methuselah dies, the oldest of men, aged 969, in the year of the flood	1656	2348
	The earth was probably fully peopled at this time.		
vi. vii.	The same year, Noah, being 600 years old, by divine command enters the ark. Thus Adam lived till Lamech, the father of Noah, was 56 years of age: Noah was 595 years of age when Lamech died; and Shem was above 90 at the same time. For it is not clear which of Noah's sons was the first born.		
vii. 4	10th day of the 2d month (part of October and November) God commands Noah to prepare to enter the ark.		
7—9	17th Noah enters the ark, with his wife,		
13—16	their sons, and their wives, and the animals, and the Lord shut them in.		

		Year of World.	Before Christ.
Gen.vii.10—12	After seven days *, the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven opened. It continued during 40 days and 40 nights, till the mountains were covered 15 cubits ($7\frac{1}{2}$ yards) upward.		
viii. 4	17th day of the 7th month, (part of March and April) the ark rested upon the mountains of Ararat.		
	10th day of the 9th month, the waters, were abated.		
5	1st day of the 10th month, the tops of the mountains were seen.		
6, 7	40 days afterwards, (12th day of the 11th month—part of July and August,) Noah opened a window, and sent forth a raven.		
8, 10	After seven days, Noah sent forth a dove which returned.		
10, 11	After other 7 days, he sends it out again ; it returns in the evening, with an olive branch.		
12	7 days after, (15th of the 12th month—part of August and September,) he sent it forth again, and it did not return.		
13	1st day of the 1st month, Noah being now in his 601st year, the waters were dried up, and Noah removed part of the covering of the ark	1657	2343
14—22 ix. 1—17	27th day of the 2nd month, (part of October and November) Noah and his family and the animals quit the ark. He offers sacrifices of thanksgiving. God permits to man the use of flesh as food ; and appoints the rainbow as a token of a covenant, that he would no more send a universal deluge, nor interrupt the seasons and the produce of the earth, as had been the case during the flood.		

PERIOD II.

From the Flood to the first Call of Abraham, 420 years and 6 months.

xi. 10	Arphaxad is born the son of Shem	1658	2346
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* The words in the 11th verse, (In the 600th year of Noah's life, in the 2nd month, the 17th day of the month), must, in this view, be considered as a parenthesis, referring to the *after seven days* of the 10th verse.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

XXXV

		Year of World.	Before Christ.
Genesis xi. 12	Salah, the son of Arphaxad is born ..	1693	2311
14	Eber, the son of Salah is born	1723	2281
16	Peleg, the son of Eber, is born	1757	2247
1—9	The building of the tower of Babel, the confusion of languages, and disper- sion of the nations	1770	2230
	The beginning of the Babylonian or As- syrian monarchy by Nimrod, and of the Egyptian empire by Ham, the father of Mizraim.....	1771	2233
18	Reu, the son of Peleg, is born.....	1787	2217
20	Serug, the son of Reu, is born.....	1819	2185
	Job is supposed by some to have lived about this time.		
22	Nahor, the son of Serug, is born.....	1849	2155
24	Terah, the son of Nahor, is born.....	1878	2126
	Haran, the son of Terah, is born.....	1948	2056
ix. 28, 29	Noah dies, aged 950	2006	1998
xi. 26	Abram, the son of Terah, is born	2008	1996
	Hence it appears, that Noah lived till within two years of the birth of Abram : and it will be seen, that Isaac was 50 years old when Shem died.		
	Sarai, daughter of Haran, born	2018	1986
31, 32	Terah, Abram's father, leaves Ur of the Chaldees, and with Abram comes to Haran in Mesopotamia, where he died, aged 205.....	2082	1922

PERIOD III.

*From the second Call of Abraham to
the Departure of the Israelites out
of Egypt, 430 years.*

xii. 1—9	Abram, at God's command, leaves Ha- ran, and comes into Canaan with Sarai his wife, and Lot his nephew, and dwells at Sichem	2083	1921
10—20	Abram goes into Egypt: Pharaoh takes his wife, but soon restores her again. Abram returns from Egypt.		
xiii. 1—13	Abram and Lot separate: Lot goes to dwell at, or near, Sodom.....	2087	1917
xiv	Abram's victory over the five kings, and rescue of Lot: is met by Melchize- dek, who blesses him, and to whom he gives a tenth of the spoils	2091	1913
xv	God's covenant with Abram		
xvi	Ishmael, Abram's son by Hagar, is born	2093	1911

		Year of World.	Before Christ.
Genesis xvii.	The new covenant of the Lord with Abram, promises him Isaac, changes his name to Abraham, and that of Sarai to Sarah: institutes circumcision	2006	1898
xviii. xix.	Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, (Deut. xxix. 23.) destroyed by fire from heaven. Lot and his daughters preserved, retire first to Zoar, and then into the mountain.		
xxi.	Abraham departs from the plain of Mamre to Beer-sheba. Isaac, the child of promise, is born, Abraham being 100, and Sarah 90 years old..	2108	1896
xxii.	God, to prove Abraham's faith, commands him to sacrifice Isaac	2133	1873
xxiii. 1, 2	Sarah dies, aged 127	2145	1861
xxiv.	Isaac marries Rebekah	2147	1857
xi. 10, 11	Shem, the son of Noah, dies	2158	1846
xxv. 20—26	Esau and Jacob born, Isaac being 60 years old	2168	1836
7, 8	Abram dies, 175 years old	2183	1823
xxvii.	Jacob, having, by deceit, obtained the blessing from Isaac, goes into Mesopotamia, to his Uncle Laban	2244	1760
xxviii.			
xxix. 1—14	After seven years' service, he marries Leah and Rachel, Laban's daughters	2251	1753
15—30		2265	1739
xxxi—xxxiii.	Jacob returns to Canaan.....	2272	1732
xxxv.	Benjamin is born, and Rachel dies....		
xxxvii.	Joseph, being 17 years old, tells his dreams, his brethren hate him, and sell him to strangers, who take him into Egypt, and sell him again, as a slave, to Potiphar	2275	1729
xxxv. 28, 29	Isaac dies, aged 180	2288	1716
xli.	Joseph interpreting Pharaoh's dreams, is made Lord of all the land of Egypt. —The beginning of the seven years' plenty foretold by Joseph	2289	1715
	The beginning of the 7 years of scarcity	2296	1708
xlii.	Jacob, pressed by famine, sends his ten eldest sons to buy corn in Egypt....	2297	1707
xliii.—xlvi.	Joseph's brethren return into Egypt with Benjamin. Joseph makes himself known. Jacob, 130 years old, goes into Egypt with his family	2298	1706
xlvi.—l. 13	Jacob, having foretold the character of his sons, dies in Egypt, aged 147, and is buried in Canaan	2316	1688

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

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		Year of World.	Before Christ.
Gen. i. 22—26	Joseph dies, aged 110.....	2370	1634
Exodus vi. 16	Levi, the grandfather of Moses and Aaron, dies, aged 137.....	2385	1619
i. 8	A revolution in Egypt. The Pharaoh who knew neither Joseph nor his services, called Rameses the IId, or Rameses Miamun, persecutes the Israelites.....	2427	1577
vi. 20	Aaron born, son of Amram and Jochebed	2430	1574
ii. 1—10	Moses born, exposed, and found by Pharaoh's daughter.....	2433	1571
11—25	Moses kills an Egyptian; flies into Midian; marries Zipporah, the daughter of Jethro, the priest; has two sons by her, Gershom and Eliezer	2473	
iii.—xiii.	Moses, commissioned by God, returns into Egypt. Pharaoh, called by historians, Pharaoh-Amenophis the IId, refuses to set the Israelites at liberty. God sends ten plagues on Egypt, after which the Israelites are liberated....	2513	1491
	All the events recorded in these chapters occurred in the same year, except as a change in the beginning of the year, (Exod. xii. 1.) made the difference of some months.		

PERIOD IV.

From the departure of the Israelites out of Egypt, to their entrance into the land of Canaan, 40 years.

xiv. xv. 1—21	Pharaoh pursues the Israelites. The Red Sea divides. Israel goes through on dry ground. The Egyptians drowned. 21st of the 1st month ..	2513	1491
xix. xl. Lev. i—xxvii. Numb. i.—xiv.	After the delivery of the Law, with various circumstances of terror, the covenant of the Israelites with God, their gross idolatry, and many other events, the Tabernacle is erected, on the 1st day of the 1st month, of the 2d year after the Exodus. The priesthood is established on the arrival of the Israelites at Kadesh-barnea; whence they send twelve chosen men, one out of each tribe, to examine the land of Canaan. After forty days, these men return to Kadesh-barnea,		

		Year of World.	Before Christ.
	and exasperate the people, saying that it was peopled with giants, and had cities walled to heaven, and that they were not able to conquer it. Caleb and Joshua withstand them; the people mutiny. God swears that none of the murmurers should enter the land, but be consumed in the desert; where Israel should remain for 40 years. The people resolve on entering Canaan; but are repulsed by the Amalekites and Canaanites	2514	1490
	The people continue a considerable time at Kadesh-barnea, whence they go towards the Red Sea	2515	1489
Numbers xvi.	The rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram is supposed to have happened at the encampment at Kadesh-barnea. After wandering in the deserts of Arabia Petræa and Idumæa 37 years, they return to Mozereth, near Kadesh-barnea, in the 39th year after the Exodus	2552	1452
xx. 1	The Israelites arrive at Kadesh. Miriam dies, aged 130.		
2—13	The Israelites murmur for want of water: Moses brings water from the rock; but, he and Aaron having shewn impatience and arrogance, God declares they shall not enter into the land of promise.		
22—29	They go to mount Hor, where Aaron dies, aged 123.		
xxi. 4—9	They arrive at Zalmonah, where it is supposed Moses raises the brazen serpent, though some think it happened at Punon.		
xxii.—xxv.	Israel encamped in the plains of Moab Balak, king of Moab, sends for Balaam	2553	1447
xxxii.	Distribution of the countries of Sihon, king of the Ammorites, and Og, king of Bashan, to the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh.		
Deut. v. &c.	Moses renews the covenant of Israel with the Lord.		
xxxiv. 5—12	Moses dies in the 12th month of the holy year, being 120 years old. Joshua succeeds him.		

		Year of World.	Before Christ.
	The whole book of Deuteronomy, ending with the death of Moses, bears date	2553	1447
	The books of Moses contain the history of 2552 years complete.		
Joshua ii. 2.	Joshua sends spies to Jericho in the 1st month (part of March and April.)		
PERIOD V.			
<i>From the entrance of the Israelites into the land of Canaan, to the building of the Temple by Solomon, 447 years.</i>			
iii. iv.	The Israelites pass over Jordan, at the time of its overflowing, in barley-harvest	2553	1451
v	Joshua restores circumcision.		
	Manna ceases. The first Passover after the passing over Jordan.		
vi	Jericho taken.		
ix.	The Gibeonites make a league with Joshua.		
x.	War of the five kings against Gibeon, whom Joshua defeats. The day miraculously prolonged.		
xi.	War of Joshua against the kings of Canaan	2554	1450
xiii.	Joshua divides the conquered country among Judah, Ephraim, and the half tribe of Manasseh	2559	1445
xviii.	The Ark and the Tabernacle fixed at Shiloh in the tribe of Ephraim	2560	1444
xiv.—xvii.	Joshua finishes the division of the country.		
xix.—xxi.			
xxiv. 1—28	Joshua renews the covenant between the Lord and the Israelites	2561	1443
29—33	Joshua dies aged 110 years. Eleazar dies.		
Judges i. 1—7	After his death the Elders govern about 18 or 20 years, during which time happen the wars of Judah with Adoni-bezek.		
xvii, xviii.	During the succeeding anarchy happened the idolatry of Micah, and		
xix.—xxi.	The war of the twelve tribes against Benjamin, to revenge the outrage committed on the concubine, or wife, of a Levite.		

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

		Year of World.	Before Christ.
	God sends his prophets in vain to re- claim the Hebrews. He permits, therefore, that they should fall into slavery under their enemies.		
Jud. iii. 1—11	I. Servitude of the eastern Israelites under Cushan-rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia, 8 years	2591	1413
	Othniel, the son of Kenaz, Caleb's bro- ther, delivers them, and judges the people 40 years	2599	1405
12—29	II. Servitude of the eastern Israelites under Eglon, king of Moab, about 62 years after the peace of Othniel	2661	1343
	Ehud delivers them, after about 20 years	2679	1323
iii. 31	III. Servitude of the Israelites under the Philistines. Shamgar delivers them	2699	1305
iv. v.	IV. Servitude of the northern Israelites under Jabin, king of Hazor, 20 years, from 2699, to 2719. Deborah and Barak deliver them	2719	1285
Ruth i.—iv.	Boaz and Ruth lived, probably, about this time.		
Judg. vi. 1—10	V. Servitude of the eastern and northern Israelites under the Mi- dianites	2752	1252
vi. 11—40	Gideon delivers Israel. He governs 9 years	2759	1245
vii. viii. 1—27	Gideon dies: and Abimelech, his son by a concubine, murders 69 sons of Gideon, (Jotham alone escaping,) and procures himself to be made king of Shechem	2768	1236
viii. 28—32	Abimelech killed, after 3 years	2771	1233
ix. 1—6	Tola judge of Israel after Abimelech, governs 23 years	2772	1232
ix. 7—57	Jair judges Israel, chiefly beyond Jor- dan, 22 years	2795	1210
x. 1, 2	VI. Servitude under the Philistines and Ammonites	2799	1206
3—5	Jephthah delivers the Israelites beyond Jordan	2817	1187
6—18	His rash vow, and the case of his daughter.		
xi.	Jephthah dies, and is succeeded by Ibzan	2823	1182
xii. 7, 8	Ibzan dies, and Elon succeeds him	2830	1175
10, 11	Elon dies, and Abdon succeeds him . .	2840	1165
12, 13			

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

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		Year of World.	Before Christ.
Judges xii. 15	Abdon dies. The high-priest Eli succeeds as Judge of Israel	2848	1157
xiii. 1	VII. Servitude under the Philistines, 40 years.		
1 Sam. i. ii. } 1—10	Samuel born	2849	1155
Judges xiv. xvi.	Samson marries at Timnath Samson delivered to the Philistines by Dalilah. Pulls down the temple of Dagon upon himself and a great multitude of the Philistines, and is killed. He defended Israel 20 years, from 2867 to 2887	2867	1137
1 Sam. iv.	War between the Philistines and the Israelites. The ark taken by the Philistines. Death of the high-priest Eli. He governed Israel 40 years ..	2887	1117
v. vi. vii. 1, 2	The Philistines send back the ark with presents. It is deposited at Kirjath-jearim.	2888	1116
vii. 3—17	Samuel is acknowledged chief and judge of Israel 39 or 40 years. Victory of the Israelites over the Philistines.		
viii.	The Israelites ask a king of Samuel ...	2908	1096
ix. x.	Saul is appointed and consecrated king.....	2909	1095
xiii.	War of the Philistines against Saul, who, having disobeyed Samuel's orders, is rejected by God	2911	1093
xiv.	Jonathan's victory over the Philistines		
xvi.	David, son of Jesse, born	2919	1085
xvii.	David anointed king by Samuel	2941	1063
xxviii.	David kills the Philistine giant Goliath	2942	1062
xxxi.	Saul consults the witch of Endor	2949	1055
2 Sam. ii. 1—11	Saul kills himself. David acknowledged king by Judah, and consecrated a second time. Reigns at Hebron.		
12—32	Ishbosheth, son of Saul, reigns at Mahanaim, beyond Jordan.		
iii.	Abner quits Ishbosheth; resorts to David. Is treacherously slain by Joab	2956	
iv. v. 1—5	Ishbosheth being assassinated, David is acknowledged king over all Israel, and consecrated the third time at Hebron.		
v. 6—10	Jerusalem taken from the Jebusites by David	2957	1047

		Year of World.	Before Christ.
2 Sam. vi. & 1 Chron. xiii.—xv. }	David brings the ark from Kirjath-jea- rim to Jerusalem	2959	1045
2 Sam. vii. 1 Chron. xvii.	David designs to build a temple to the Lord; is diverted from it by the pro- phet Nathan	2960	1044
2 Sam. xi. xii.	Joab besieges Rabbah, the capital of the Ammonites. David's adultery with Bathsheba.		
	Uriah killed. Rabbah taken	2969	1035
	Solomon, son of Bathsheba, born	2971	1033
xv.	Absalom's rebellion against his father David	2981	1023
xviii.	Absalom killed by Joab.		
xx.	Sedition of Sheba, the son of Bichri, appeased by Joab.		
xxiv. 1 Chr. xxi.	David numbers the people. Pestilence sent	2987	1017
1 Kings i.	Adonijah aspires to the kingdom. Da- vid causes his son Solomon to be crowned	2989	1015
ii. 1 Chron. } xxviii. xxix. }	David dies, aged 70	2990	1014
1 Kings ii. 12	Solomon reigns alone, having reigned about 6 months with his father. He reigned 40 years. Adonijah slain. Abiathar deprived of office of high- priest; Zadok high-priest alone. Joab slain in the temple.		
	Solomon marries a daughter of the king of Egypt	2991	1013
Song of Solom. 1 Kings v. 2 Chron. ii.	The Song of Solomon, probably written Hiram, king of Tyre, congratulates So- lomon on his accession. Solomon agrees with him for timber and work- men towards building the temple ..	2992	1012
1 Kings vi. 1 2 Chron. iii. 1.	Solomon lays the foundation of the temple 480 years after Israel's depar- ture from Egypt.		
1 Kings vi. vii. 2 Chron. iii. iv.	The temple finished, being $7\frac{1}{2}$ years in building	3000	1005

PERIOD VI.

*From the building of the Temple, to the
Babylonish Captivity, 400 years.*

1 Kings viii. } 2 Chr. v—vii. }	Dedication of the Temple	3001	1004
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CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

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		Year of World.	Before Christ.
1 Ks. ix. 10—24	Solomon finishes the building of his palace, and of that of his queen, the daughter of Pharaoh	3012	992
Proverbs	The Proverbs of Solomon, probably written.		
1 Kgs. xi. 1—13	Solomon's idolatry.		
xi. 26—40	Jeroboam rebels against Solomon. He flies into Egypt to Shishak	3026	978
Ecclesiastes	The book of Ecclesiastes probably written.		
1 Kgs. xi. 41 } —43. 2 Chr. } ix. 30, 31. }	The death of Solomon	3029	975
x.	Rehoboam succeeds. The ten tribes revolt.		
1 Ks. xii. 2— } 20. 2 Chr. x. }	Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, acknowledged king of the ten tribes, or Israel.		

Kings of Judah for 388 years.

		Year of World.	Before Christ.
2 Kings xii. } 21—24. }	Rehoboam, intending to subdue the ten tribes is commanded to forbear. He reigned 17 years.	3029	975
xiii. 1, 2. 2 Chron. xi. } 13—17. }	Josiah foretold by name. The priests and Israelites that fear the Lord, withdraw in great numbers from the kingdom of Israel into that of Judah.	3030	974
1 Kings xiv. } 21—24 }	Rehoboam gives himself up to impiety	3032	972
25—28	Shishak king of Egypt comes to Jerusalem, plunders the temple and the king	3033	971
31	Rehoboam dies	3046	958
2 Chron. xii. } 16. xiii. }	Abijam, or Abijah (called Abia, Matt. 17.) succeeds him; reigns 3 years.		
1 Kings xv. } 1—8. }			
2 Chron. xiii.	Abijam's victory over Jeroboam	3047	957
2 Ch. xiv. 1—8	Abijam dies. Asa succeeds him	3049	955
1 K. xv. 9—15	Asa suppresses idolatry in Judah	3053	951
2 Chron. xx. 31	Jehoshaphat, son of Asa, born	3055	949
xiv. 9—15	Asa's victory over Zerah, king of Ethiopia or Cush.	3063	941
xvi.	Asa engages Ben-hadad, king of Damascus, or Syria, to make an irruption into the territories of the kingdom of Israel, to force Baasha to quit his undertaking at Ramah.	3064	940
xxi. 20	Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat, born . .	3080	924
xvi. 12	Asa, troubled with a lameness, (probably the gout) places his confidence in physicians, rather than in God.	3087	917
1 K. xxii. 41, 42 2 Ch. xvi. 13, 14	Asa dies, having reigned 41 years	3090	914
xvii.	Jehoshaphat succeeds Asa He destroys the high places and groves	3092	

Kings of Israel for 264 years.

		Year of World.	Before Christ.
1 K. xii. 2—20 2 Ch. x. 2—19	Jeroboam, son of Nebat, the first king of Israel, or of the revolted ten tribes. He reigned 19 years.	3029	975
1 Kings xii. 26—33.	Jeroboam abolishes the worship of the Lord, and sets up the golden calves in Bethel and in Dan.	3030	974
2 Chron. xiii.	Jeroboam overcome by Abijam, loses 500,000 men.	3047	957
1 Kings xv.	Jeroboam dies, Nadab his son succeeds. He reigns 2 years.	3050	954
	Nadab dies. Baasha succeeds him. Reigns 20 years.	3054	950
2 Ch. xvi. 1—5	Baasha builds Ramah, to hinder Israel from going to Jerusalem.	3064	940
1 K. xvi. 6—8	Baasha dies. Elah, his son, succeeds him. Reigns 2 years.	3074	930
9—22	Elah killed by Zimri, who usurps the kingdom 7 days.	3076	928
15—20	Omri besieges Zimri in Tirzah. Zimri burns himself in the palace.		
21—23	Omri prevails over Tibni. Reigns alone in the 31st year of Asa.	3079	925
24	Omri builds Samaria; makes it the seat of his kingdom.	3080	924
28	Omri dies.....	3086	918
xvi. 29	Ahab, his son, succeeds. Reigns 22 years.	3086	918
The prophet Elijah in the kingdom of Israel.			

Kings of Judah.

		Year of World.	Before Christ.
2 Chr. xxii. 2	Ahaziah born, son of Jehoram and Athaliah, and grandson of Jehoshaphat	3097	907
2 K. viii. 16, 17	Jehoshaphat, nominates his son Jehoram king ; makes him his viceroy,	3106	898
1 Kings xxii. 2 Ch. xviii. xix.	Jehoshaphat accompanies Ahab in his expedition against Ramoth-gilead ; where he narrowly escapes a great danger.	3107	897
1 K. xxii. 48, 49 2 Chron. xx. } 35—37. }	Jehoshaphat equips a fleet for Ophir : Ahaziah king of Israel partaking of the design, the fleet is destroyed by tempest.	3108	896
xx. 1—30	About this time, Jehoshaphat is invaded by the Ammonites and Moabites, over whom he obtains a miraculous victory.		
	Jehoshaphat invests his son Jehoram with the royal dignity.	3112	892
1 Kings xxii. 50 2 Kings viii. } 16—18. }	Jehoshaphat dies, after reigning 25 years.	3115	889
2 Chron. xxi. } 1—7. }	Jehoram, or Joram, succeeds him.		

Kings of Israel.

		Year of World.	Before Christ.
1 Kings xviii.	Elijah presents himself before Ahab, and slays the false prophets of Baal.	3096	908
xix. 19—21	Gives the prophetic unction to Elisha		
xx.	Ben-hadad, king of Syria, besieges Samaria ; is forced to quit it.	3103	901
	Returns the year following ; is defeated at Aphek.	3104	900
xxii. 51	Ahab invests his son Ahaziah with the royal power and dignity.	3106	898
xxii. 1—40	Ahab wars against Ramoth-gilead ; is killed in disguise.	3107	897
2 Chron. xviii.			
1 Kings xxii. } 51—53 }	Ahaziah succeeds. He reigns 2 years.		

Kings of Israel.

Year of World.	Year of Israel.	Event.
3098		1 Kings xiii. Elijah predicts himself before Ahab, and slays the false prophets of Baal.
3103	291	19. 13-21 Gives the propheticunction to Elijah. Ben-hadad, king of Syria, besieges Samaria; is forced to quit it.
3104	300	22. Returns the year following; is defeated at Aphek.
3105	303	23. Ahab invests his son Ahaziah with the royal power and dignity.
3107	307	24. Ahab wars against Hamath-gilead; is killed in discomfiture.
		25. Ahaziah succeeds. He reigns 2 years.

A
POPULAR COMMENTARY ON THE BIBLE,
IN A
SERIES OF SERMONS.

SERMON I.

INTRODUCTORY, NO. 1.—HISTORY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

2 TIMOTHY iii. 16, 17.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God ; and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness ; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

WHAT is this which I hold in my hand ? You will say, THE BIBLE, THE BOOK OF GOD, which contains THE WORD OF GOD, OR THE REVEALED KNOWLEDGE AND WILL OF GOD.

You answer rightly. But, I ask, again, How do you *know* it to be so ? *When* and *how* did it come from God ? Did it come, *in its present form*, by an hand from heaven, like the “roll of a book” presented to the Prophet Ezekiel, as mentioned in the second and third chapters of his prophecy ;—or by some other means ?

Some of you—perhaps many—have, probably, never thought upon the subject, are surprised at the questions, and are unable to answer them. It is my intention, therefore, to offer you what I hope may

be interesting and satisfactory information upon the subject.

You know that, on the Sunday called *Septuagesima*, which is three Sundays before Lent, the Church begins to take the first Lesson at Morning and at Evening Service from the first book, called *Genesis*; that is, we begin the Bible; and, sometimes passing over chapters, and sometimes whole books, and with some variations in the order, we go through, in a summary way, the whole of the Old Testament in a year. It is my purpose, therefore, with God's assistance, on Septuagesima Sunday, to begin *a course of Sermons explaining the Bible*, dwelling chiefly on those chapters which are the Lessons for the day; but noticing briefly whatever may have been passed over between them; and, thus, at the end of a year, I shall have given you as complete and convenient an explanation of, or a COMMENTARY on, the OLD TESTAMENT, as the nature of the case will admit. In a *second year*, I propose to myself to go through the NEW TESTAMENT, thus completing THE BIBLE.

And, to enable you to understand it the better, I purpose, on the four Sundays before Septuagesima, beginning this day, to give you *four Introductory Discourses*; this first to be *a History of the Old Testament*;—the second *a History of the New Testament*, and of the form in which our Bible now appears, the *third, on the Inspiration of the Bible*, and the *fourth, on studying of the Bible*. And I hope, that such of you as can read, and have Bibles, will regularly bring them to church with you, and accompany me as I proceed.

To begin, then, with *the History of the Old Testament*: According to the computations upon which we can best depend, the world was created

less than six thousand years ago. In the state of innocence, in Paradise, God conversed frequently and familiarly with our first parents; and, after the Fall, made himself and his will known to the patriarchs by communication with them face to face, by vision, by dreams, and by his angels; but, till the time of Moses, upwards of 2400 years after the creation, and more than 1500 years before Christ, there was nothing written, or at least nothing which has come down to us. But Moses, who was the leader of the Israelites out of Egypt, and delivered a law to them from God, wrote an account of the creation of the world, (which could only be known by immediate revelation, or information from God,) the state of innocence and the transgression of man, the prophecy and promise of a recovery from that state by a Redeemer, the destruction of all the world, except eight persons, by a flood, the increase and second corruption of mankind, the separating one family from them, which grew into a people, with the promise of a certain land to them for their worldly possession, and their going to dwell in another country. This is the subject of one *book*, or *volume*, called *Genesis*, or generation, or *creation*. Books, in those times, were not like ours, but were written upon large broad sheets, sometimes of linen, sometimes of the inner films, or skins, of paper reeds, and sometimes on the skins of beasts, or on leather, and were kept rolled upon a stick; thus we hear of the “volume,” or “roll of a book.” One of these ancient *volumes* may be seen in the public library at Cambridge*. Moses likewise wrote of the *Exodus*,

* “The Cambridge Roll, or Indian Copy of the Pentateuch,

or *going out* of this people from the strange country where they were kept in bondage, to take possession of the promised land;—and of the *law* given by God to them, this is called *Leviticus*.—He, also, wrote an account of the *numbering* of the people, and of their journeying for forty years in the wilderness, instead of immediately taking possession of the promised land, because they murmured against God, this is called the book of *Numbers*;—and he, farther, wrote an account of the repeating, or *delivering the law afresh*, at the end of the forty years, before they entered into the promised land: this is called *Deuteronomy*, or the *second law*, or *second giving* of the law. These are the five books of Moses, called also the *Pentateuch*, from two Greek words signifying *the five books*; and, are also called *the law*, from that being the most important part of them. These were kept, as we learn, (Deut. xxxi. 26), in the side of the Ark in the Tabernacle.

* To the same sanctuary were consigned, as they which may also be denominated *Malabaric*, is written on a roll of goats-skins dyed *red*, and was discovered by Dr. Buchanan in the record chest of a synagogue of the black Jews, in the interior of Malayala, in the year 1806. It measures forty-eight feet in length, and in breadth about twenty-two inches, or a Jewish cubit. The book of Leviticus and the greater part of the book of Deuteronomy are wanting. It appears from calculation, that the original length of the roll was not less than ninety English feet. In its present condition it consists of thirty-seven skins; contains one hundred and seventeen columns of writing, perfectly clear and legible; and exhibits a noble specimen of the manner and form of the most ancient Hebrew manuscripts among the Jews.” (Horne’s Introduction to the Study of the Holy Scriptures. Second edition. Vol. II. Addenda, p. 789.)

* In the following part of this discourse, use has been made of Gray’s Key to the Old Testament, and Bickersteth’s Scripture Help.

were successively produced, all those historical and prophetical books, which were written from the time of Joshua, to that of David, including their own works. Solomon, having afterwards built *a Temple* to the honour of God, appointed that, in future, the sacred books should be kept there, and enriched the collection by the inspired productions of his own pen. After him, a succession of *Prophets* continued to denounce vengeance against the disobedience of the Hebrew nation, and to foretell the calamities which that disobedience must inevitably produce. It is to be observed, however, that the books do not stand in the order in which they were written; they were, perhaps, not arranged, at first, according to the dates; or they might have been accidentally transposed in the written rolls. Jonah, Amos, Isaiah, Hosea, Joel, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Jeremiah, Habakkuk and Obadiah successively flourished before the destruction of the temple, and contributed, by their unerring predictions, to set forth the attributes and designs of Providence, and to enlarge the volume of inspired wisdom by invaluable additions: I shall speak more particularly of each book of the Bible as it occurs in the course of the year.

The Temple was dedicated about the year of the world 3000, and about 1000 years before the coming of Christ. About 420 years after its foundation, the temple being rifled and burnt by Nebuchadnezzar, the original writings of the Law and of the Prophets must have been removed; and might be carried by the Jews to Babylon: or, perhaps, that part of the Hebrew nation which remained at Jerusalem, obtained permission, or found means, to retain them.

Within the seventy years during which the Jews were detained in captivity, were composed the affecting lamentations of Jeremiah, the comfortable prophecies of Ezekiel, and the history and prophecies of Daniel.

On the accession of Cyrus to the throne of Persia, the Jews being released from their captivity, returned to Jerusalem about the year of the world 3468, having, doubtless, procured, or recovered, the original books of the Law and of the Prophets, with a design to place them in the temple, which, after much opposition from the Samaritans, they rebuilt, in about twenty years, being encouraged to persevere in this pious work, by the exhortations of Haggai and Zechariah; they, also, restored the divine worship according to the law.

About fifty years after the temple was rebuilt, Ezra, who, since the return from Babylon, had been engaged in restoring the Jewish church, is said, by tradition, to have made, in conjunction with the great synagogue, a collection of the Sacred Writings; and, being assisted by the Holy Spirit, he was enabled to distinguish what was authentic and divine, (as there were other writings for which a claim to divine authority was made,) and to reject such parts as rested but on false pretensions; this collection was, therefore, free from error, and rescued from all accidental corruptions.

To this genuine collection of Ezra, were, afterwards added, his own sacred writings, as well as those of Nehemiah and of Malachi. These were, probably, inserted into what is called the *canon*, or *rule*, or *authentic list* of Sacred Scriptures, by Simon the Just, who is said to have been the last of the *Great Synagogue*. This is a term applied by the

Jews to a succession of elders, supposed to have amounted to one hundred and twenty, who had the government of the Jewish church after the captivity. They are said to have superintended and closed the canon of the scriptures, or of the Old Testament; for, from Malachi, till the time of John the Baptist, a period of above 400 years, no prophet arose. John, as it were, connected the two covenants. Of him Malachi prophesied, (iv. 5.,) that he should precede the great day of the Lord.

This *Canon*, or List, of the Old Testament was, by the Jews, computed to contain *twenty-two books*, a number agreeing with the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, and which were the same as the catalogue of those which are received by our church. With the Jews, however, Judges and Ruth were reckoned but as one book; as likewise the two books of Samuel; those of Kings and of Chronicles were respectively united into single books; Ezra and Nehemiah were also joined together, as the prophecies and lamentations of Jeremiah were taken under one head; so that, if we consider the twelve minor Prophets, as they were comprehended in the Jewish canon, as one book, the number of the books will be exactly twenty-two*. If the Prophets wrote any other books, they are now lost; but, as no more were admitted into the canon, we have reason to suppose, that no more were inspired, though

* 1 Genesis. 2 Exodus. 3 Leviticus. 4 Numbers. 5 Deuteronomy. 6 Joshua. 7 Judges and Ruth. 8 Two books of Samuel. 9 Two books of Kings. 10 Two books of Chronicles. 11 Ezra and Nehemiah. 12 Esther. 13 Job. 14 Psalms. 15 Proverbs. 16 Ecclesiastes. 17 Song of Solomon. 18 Isaiah. 19 Jeremiah and Lamentations. 20 Ezekiel. 21 Daniel. 22 The lesser Prophets, 12 in number.

many other books are mentioned and referred to in the Scriptures, which, having no pretensions to inspiration, were never received into the sacred list. These twenty-two books have an unquestionable title to be considered as the genuine and inspired productions of those authors to whom they are severally assigned. They contain prophecies, and every other inward proof of their divine origin; they were received as authentic by the Hebrews, and pronounced to be inspired oracles by our Lord and the Evangelical and other New Testament writers, who cite them as complete and uncorrupted.

These writings were, likewise, considered as exclusively canonical in the Christian Church, during the first four centuries; after which some provincial councils attempted to increase the number, by some *apocryphal books*, which, however, they annexed as of only secondary authority, till the council of Trent, in the infatuation, or folly, of popery, pronounced them to be equally infallible in doctrine and truth.

The Jews divided the Sacred Books into *three classes*. The first, which they called *the Law*, contained, as was before observed, the five books of Moses. The second originally included thirteen books, which they considered as the works of *the Prophets*. The third comprised four books, called by the Jews *Chetubim*, and by the Greeks *Hagiographa*, or the *holy*, or *moral*, books; these are conceived to have been the Psalms and the three books of Solomon, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Canticles. Our Lord, in his reply to the lawyer who tempted him, distinguishes the sacred Scriptures as “the Law and the Prophets.” (Matt. xxii. 40.) And, in his conversation with the two disciples

going to Emmaus, on the evening after his resurrection, “beginning at Moses, and all the Prophets, he expounded unto them, in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself.” (Luke xxiv. 27.) And, in his interview with the disciples at Jerusalem, the same evening, he makes a farther distinction; “he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me,” (Luke xxiv. 44;) where, by the term *Psalms*, is probably meant an allusion to the division of the Scriptures into the Law, Prophets and Chetubim, or Hagiographa.

The Hebrew doctors invented many fanciful refinements, concerning the nature and degrees of *inspiration*, which are to be ascribed to the books of each class. But it may be sufficient here to remark, that, though the Scriptures mention different modes, by which God communicated his instructions to the Prophets, and particularly attributes a superior degree of eminence to Moses, yet that these differences and this distinction, however they may affect the dignity of the minister employed, cannot be supposed to increase, or to lessen, the certainty of the things revealed. Whatever God condescends to communicate to mankind by his servants must be equally infallible and true, whether derived from *immediate converse* with him, from an *outward voice*, or from *dreams* or *visions*, or, lastly, from *the inward and enlightening influence of the Holy Spirit*. The manner of communication, where the interference of God is established, cannot, in any respect, exalt, or diminish, the character of the thing re-

vealed. But it is my intention, as I have before stated, to treat more fully on the *inspiration* of the Scriptures, in a separate discourse.

In order that all God's people might know his law, "Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, when all Israel is come to appear before the Lord thy God, in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this Law before all Israel in their hearing. Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this Law; and that their children, which have not known any thing, may hear, and learn to fear the Lord your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it." (Deut. xxxi. 10—13.; Josh. viii. 34, 35. ; Neh. viii. 1—5.) Their king was required to "write him a copy of this Law in a book, out of that which is before the Priests the Levites, and to read therein all the days of his life." (Deut. xvii. 18, 19.) Their Priests, also, were commanded to "teach the children of Israel all the statutes, which the Lord had spoken to them by the hand of Moses." (Levit. x. 11.) And parents were charged, not only to make it familiar to themselves, but, also, to "teach it diligently to their children." (Deut. vi. 7.) Besides this, a severe prohibition was given against either adding to, or diminishing from, it. (Deut. iv. 2. ; xii. 32.)

[A very satisfactory proof of the uncorrupted state of the five books of Moses arises from what is called *the Samaritan Pentateuch*; that is, from a copy of the

Pentateuch in the ancient Hebrew characters, which the Samaritans have preserved for nearly three thousand years; and, as they have had no dealings with the Jews, and as there are no variations in it from the Jewish copy, except the well-known insertion of mount *Gerizim*, instead of mount *Ebal*, (Deut. xxxvii. 4,) to sanction their separation; and such variations as will always arise from frequent transcribing, there is no room to doubt both the Jewish and the Samaritan being the same as were written by Moses *.]

After the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity, the books of the Law and the Prophets were publicly read in their synagogues every Sabbath day. (Acts xiii. 14, 15, 27. Luke iv. 17—20.)

[With a view to this, the five books of the Law were divided into fifty-four sections. This division many of the Jews hold to have been made by Moses himself; but others, with more probability, ascribe it to Ezra. The number was fifty-four, because, in what was called their *intercalated* year, that is, every third year, a month was put in, or added, and there were fifty-four Sabbaths: in other years they reduced them to fifty-two, by twice joining together two short sections. Till the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes, they read only the Law; but the reading of that being then prohibited, they substituted in the room of it fifty-four sections out of the Prophets; and, when the reading of the Law was

* In these Sermons several passages are printed between brackets, which might be omitted, either in preaching, or reading in a family, if the passage should happen not to be suited to the congregation, or the Sermon should be thought too long.

restored by the Maccabees, the section which was read every Sabbath out of the *Law* served for their *first* Lesson, and the section out of the *Prophets* for their *second*.]

So great was the reverence of the Jews for their sacred writings, that, according to Josephus (*Contra Apion*. lib 1. § 8), they would suffer any torments, and even death itself, rather than allow a single jot, or tittle, to be changed. They had all the words and letters numbered, and a law was enacted, which denounced him to be guilty of inexpressible sin who should presume to make the slightest alteration in them. Thus were they kept in remembrance; and thus, were they preserved from being corrupted.

In the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt, about 270 years before Christ, a *translation* of the Scriptures was made into the *Greek* language, which is called the *Septuagint*, which word means *seventy*, from a story of the translation having been made by *seventy-two* Jewish interpreters, and, so, called the *seventy*, as a round number. This was a very providential circumstance, as it greatly helped to spread the knowledge of the Jewish history, of the one true God, and of the expected Messiah, the king of the Jews. The *Septuagint* was used in all those countries where Alexander, in his conquests, had established the Greek language; and seems to have been admitted into the Jewish synagogues in Judæa, and even at Jerusalem, where that language then prevailed; and was, certainly, most used there in the time of our Saviour, for the quotations in the New Testament, from the Old, seem to have been made according to that version.

It seems desirable, here, to give a short account

of the Jews, from the time of their captivity, to the time of Christ, to form a connection between the Old and New Testament history.

The Jews had many revolutions of peace and war, and some changes in the mode of their government, from the time of their return from the captivity in Babylon, to their complete subjection by the Romans; but their sacerdotal, or priestly, government, as it is sometimes called, continued, with but little interruption, through the whole space of about 600 years. Having returned into their own country under the sanction and authority of Cyrus, they acknowledged the sovereignty of the kings of Persia, till that empire was overturned by Alexander the Great, about 330 years before Christ. They then became subject to his successors, first in Egypt, afterwards in Syria; till, having been deprived of their civil and religious liberties, for three years and a half, by Antiochus Epiphanes, about 168 years before Christ, they were restored, both to the exercise of their religion, and to their ancient independence, by the piety and bravery of Mattathias and his descendants, the Maccabees. Under these princes, they became an entirely free state, supported by good troops, strong garrisons and alliances, not only with neighbouring powers, but with remote kingdoms, even Rome itself. This glory of the Jews, however, was but of short continuance; for, though the decline of the kingdoms of Egypt and Syria, prevented their interference in the affairs of other states, yet the entire ruin of these two kingdoms, by the great accession of power which it brought to the Romans, paved the way for the destruction of the Jewish commonwealth. The Romans, under Pompey, compelled the Jews to submit to their arms, about sixty-three

years before Christ; and, from that time, their country was tributary to the Romans, although it was still governed by princes of the family of the Maccabees. The last of that family was conquered and deposed by Herod the Great, an Idumean by birth, but of the Jewish religion, about thirty-seven years before Christ, who had been appointed king of the Jews by the Romans, and enjoyed a long reign over the whole of Palestine, in the course of which he greatly diminished the civil power of the high priests. He repaired and beautified the temple; and, at his death, about two years after the birth of Christ, was succeeded in the government of the greater part of Palestine by his son Archelaus, whose misconduct caused Augustus to banish him, and to reduce his dominions into the form of a Roman province. Thus it appears, that, with the exception of the short predicted period of Antiochus Epiphanes, the kingdom of Judah, for some time independent, but generally tributary, continued to enjoy its own religion, and the form of its civil government, till after the birth of the Messiah: the sceptre had not departed from Judah till Shiloh came, as Jacob, on his death-bed, had foretold. (Gen. xlix. 10.)

In general the Jews were never so faithful to God, as immediately after their return from captivity. We never hear of idolatry being set up again by them. Plenty was soon seen; and there was profound peace and tranquillity for nearly 300 years, from Nehemiah to the Maccabees. Hence the glowing description of this time in the Prophets; though it will receive its full accomplishment only in Messiah's reign.

Such is the History of the Old Testament and of

the Jews till the time of Christ, and how grateful ought we to be to God for his infinite goodness and condescension in making himself known to his creatures, in selecting a particular family, or nation, from the rest of the world, to preserve this knowledge, and that he has not left it to the uncertainty of *traditions*, but given it in *permanent writings*.

Let us look abroad to those nations, in these our days, who have not the knowledge of the true God. How are they sunk in ignorance and superstition, what follies and wickedness do they practise, and how are they the slaves of lust and cruelty! To mention but a *few* of the rites practised in but *one* nation,—where it is the custom to put to death all unhealthy infants, by throwing them to the beasts of the waters,—where wives are compelled, on the death of their husbands, to be burned alive with their dead bodies, and where this is done to the number of thousands in a year,—and where the plains near their idol's temple are covered with the bones of those, who, in age and sickness, crawl in pilgrimage thither, thinking to secure everlasting happiness by dying there, and where the beasts of prey begin to devour them before they are yet dead,—and where, likewise, it is thought to secure everlasting happiness, by voluntarily throwing themselves to be crushed under the wheels of the ponderous car of the idol. And this is done when a considerable portion of the world is Christian,—by people subject to this country, a Christian government,—and with Christians living amongst them. What must the world have been, then, when almost the whole of it was given up to idolatry, and God was pleased to call Abraham from amongst them to preserve a knowledge of Him!

But *the Law* was only a schoolmaster to bring us to CHRIST,—it was only the *dawning* of a day, of which the GOSPEL is the NOON-TIDE SPLENDOUR. Blessing and honour, and glory, and thanksgiving, and power be unto God, and to his Son, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

SERMON II.

INTRODUCTORY, NO. II.—HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT,
AND OF OUR BIBLE.

2 TIMOTHY iii. 16, 17.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

IN my last Discourse I proposed to you my intention of beginning, on Septuagesima Sunday, a course of Sermons in exposition of the Bible, dwelling chiefly, in the Old Testament, on those chapters which are appointed for the first Lesson at morning and at evening service, but noticing briefly such chapters, or books, as may have been passed over between; by which means we should go through the whole Old Testament in the course of a year, in as convenient a manner as could well be from the pulpit; and that I purposed going through the New Testament in another year. But, before I begin these, I farther proposed, beginning last Sunday, four Introductory Sermons; the first, on *the History of the Old Testament*, which I then gave;—the second, on *the History of the New Testament and of our Bible*, as we now have it,—and which I shall give this day;—the third, on *the Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures*;—and the fourth, on *the best manner of studying them*.

I proceed, then, now, to the history of the New Testament.

The New Testament consists of the *Gospels*, the *Acts of the Apostles*, the *Epistles*, or Letters, and the book of *Revelation*. The word *Gospel* signifies *good news*, or *glad tidings*, that is the “glad tidings of great joy to all nations,” that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was come into the world to die for us sinners, and to bring us to God and everlasting happiness. What news ever was of greater importance, what news so calculated to rejoice the heart!!

There are *four Gospels*, or histories of Jesus Christ, written by different persons, and at different times, yet all agreeing together.

The first Gospel was written by MATTHEW, who was a *publican*, or a collector of taxes for the Romans. Christ called him to be one of his apostles, and he immediately left his gainful employment, and remained constantly with him. It was, probably, about five years after Christ’s death that Matthew wrote his Gospel; and, having accompanied Christ in his journeyings, and witnessed his miracles, he is considered as having written his account of things in the order of time in which they happened. He continually refers to the Old Testament.

MARK’S Gospel is supposed to have been written under the inspection of the Apostle Peter, at the request of the Christians at Rome, about the year of Christ sixty-six, or about thirty-three years after the death of Christ. He records many of the same facts as Matthew, with some additional occurrences. Mark was a Jew, living in Judea, and is considered as having written his account of events nearly in the

order of time in which they occurred. He is called by St. Peter, (1 Ep. v. 13.) *Marcus*.

LUKE was a physician, and is supposed to have written his Gospel about the year sixty-six, (that is in the same year as Mark's,) while travelling with St. Paul in Greece. His history is more full than the others. Luke, having lived in Antioch, and not having himself witnessed the events he describes, is supposed to have little regard to the order of time. It is evident, from various passages of the Acts of the Apostles and of St. Paul's Epistles, that he was an almost constant companion of St. Paul. (Acts xvi. 10. xxvii. 1, 2. xxviii. 7—10. Col. iv. 14. 2 Tim. iv. 11. Philem. 24.)

JOHN was the beloved disciple of Christ, and wrote his Gospel last of all, about the year ninety-seven, to add many of our Lord's discourses not included in the other Gospels, and to confute several heresies, then springing up, respecting the person of Christ, whom he proves, in the plainest manner, to be both *God* and *man*. John, having been one of the Apostles, writes in the order of time, but with a view, however, of recording only some remarkable particulars.

The book of the ACTS of the APOSTLES was written by *Luke*, and contains the history of the church for about thirty years after Christ's death. A thorough knowledge of this book will throw much light upon the following Epistles.

The EPISTLES are *Letters*, which were written and sent by the Apostles to the Churches of Christ, or to particular persons. Jesus said to his disciples before his death, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now; but, when He, the Spirit of Truth is come, he shall guide you into all truth"

(John xvi. 13.) Indeed many of the peculiar glories, duties, and blessings of Christianity were so connected with, and dependant upon, the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ, that they, evidently, could not be generally declared, till the facts had taken place. After the resurrection of Christ, the distinguishing doctrines of the Gospel-covenant were revealed to the Apostles, and, by them, to the world, plainly and distinctly. The Epistles more fully display the doctrines of grace and the mysteries of godliness. They speak continually of Christ, and their great end seems to be, to magnify his person, his salvation, and his glory.

Fourteen, out of the *twenty-one* Epistles, were written by *Paul*; of whose enmity to Christ, and most extraordinary conversion to be his most strenuous Apostle, we have an account in the Acts.

The Epistle to the ROMANS was written to Christians whom the Apostle had not yet seen, who lived at Rome, which was, then, the capital, or chief city, of the whole world. It contains a statement of the doctrines of the Gospel in regular order. The ground-work, or first principles of the Gospel are given in the first five chapters; and the blessed fruits arising from an experimental knowledge of those principles are displayed in the privileges set forth in the six following chapters, and in the precepts, or moral duties, of the last five. St. Paul shews, that all mankind are guilty before God; and that the only way to be justified, or accounted righteous, in his sight, to obtain pardon, and a title to eternal life, is by believing in the heart in Jesus Christ; not that faith *merits* salvation, but it has pleased God to appoint *faith* as the means, that salvation might be altogether *through grace*. He proves

these doctrines by various arguments, and from the example of Abraham; and then shews their practical tendency. No part of Scripture ought to be more thoroughly “read, marked, learned, and inwardly digested.” It is in entire opposition to all ideas of salvation by our own works, either in whole, or in part. It sets before us free redemption, justification, and salvation in Christ Jesus alone; and, yet, shews us, that the people of Christ will be “a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”

CORINTH was a large and wealthy city in Greece. Few churches were more blessed with miraculous gifts than that of Corinth: but these gifts becoming occasions of pride, no church was so corrupt. Paul stayed here, as appears from Acts xviii. 9, 10, nearly two years. He wrote his FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS to correct abuses, and give advice in some particular cases which had been submitted to him.

In the SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS, St. Paul defends himself from charges made against him, exhorts to reformation, and threatens the impenitent.

GALATIA was a province in the lesser Asia. Paul, in his EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS, writes against false teachers, who mingled the Law of Moses and the Gospel, as if men could not be saved by faith in Christ without being circumcised and obeying the Mosaic Law; thus representing Christ as insufficient to save those who trusted in him.

EPHESUS was the chief city of the lesser Asia. The EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS breathes nothing but affection. This church was evidently in a happy state; and, in addressing it, St. Paul could pour out his whole heart.

PHILIPPI was a considerable city of Macedonia, and the church there was in a happy state of piety, and did not need reproof. THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS was written to encourage them to walk worthy of the Gospel; to warn them against false teachers; to exhort them to press forward, and to express his regard for their welfare.

COLOSSE was a great city in the lesser Asia. The first two chapters of THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS are doctrinal, the last two practical. This church, likewise, was in a flourishing condition.

THESSALONICA was the chief city of Macedonia. THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS was, probably, the first Epistle which Paul wrote. Though this church was only just raised, and much persecuted, it was in an excellent state.

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS seems to have been written to comfort them in tribulation, and to guard against the mistakes into which some had fallen, as if the Day of Judgment was close at hand; and to warn those who neglected their business and employment on that account. The second chapter appears to contain a very striking *prophecy of popery*, under the characters of *The Man of Sin*, and *The Mystery of Iniquity*.

TIMOTHY was converted under Paul's ministry; and, after labouring some time with him, was appointed Bishop of the church of Ephesus. THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY was written to assist him in the duty of watching over that church, and it is useful for the direction of Ministers in the discharge of their office to the end of time.

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY was, probably, written near the close of St. Paul's life; and consists

of exhortations to animate him to endure persecutions with courage, and to caution him against false teachers.

TITUS was converted under Paul's ministry ; and, after accompanying him for some time, he was left at *Crete*, an island which is now called *Candia*. Paul, in his EPISTLE TO TITUS, gives important, and truly excellent, advice to ministers, respecting the instruction and regulation of the church.

PHILEMON was a Christian of some eminence at *Colosse*. *Onesimus*, his slave, had run away to Rome, where he was converted by the preaching of Paul, who sent him back with this truly kind and persuasive EPISTLE TO PHILEMON. What a lesson it affords, and what a pattern it exhibits, both to master and servant !

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS is generally considered to have been written by ST. PAUL, and is intended to prove that the *Gospel* plan of salvation was prefigured and foretold in the *Old Testament* ; and, that those who believed the latter, ought, on that account, to receive the former, and give up the shadow for the substance.

JAMES wrote his EPISTLE a short time before his martyrdom. The converted Jews seem to have been in a low state ; they were *hearers*, and not *doers*, of the word. St Paul's doctrine of *free justification* was perverted and made an excuse for sin. This Epistle was designed to correct these evils, and also to comfort sufferers under the cross.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF ST. PETER was written to the Christians in the different provinces of the lesser Asia. The churches in that country were chiefly founded by St. Paul. The Epistle was, perhaps, more particularly intended for the use of the Jewish

converts, and designed to edify and comfort them in their afflictions.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF ST. PETER was written shortly before the Apostle's death, to warn believers against false prophets, who perverted the Gospel; and to exhort them, not only to "stand fast in the truth," but also to "grow in grace."

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF ST. JOHN was written by him when full of years, after the death of the other Apostles. Heresies of various kinds began to abound. Some denied the *Godhead* of Christ, and some his proper *manhood*. John adapted his instruction to the times. He dwells much on Christ, as "*God* manifested in the *flesh*," on the love of God, and on brotherly love.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF ST. JOHN was written to some Lady of rank and piety, called "the Elect Lady," to encourage her to persevere in the truth and love of God, and to exhort her to beware of those heretics who denied that Christ was come in the flesh.

THE THIRD EPISTLE OF ST. JOHN was written to *Gaius*, a man of great wealth, piety and hospitality, to request him to help forward some *missions* among the Gentiles.

JUDE was one of the Apostles, and was called also *Lebbeus*, whose surname was *Thaddeus*. He wrote his Epistle to guard believers against the same persons whom Peter, in his second Epistle, had opposed; persons who pretended to trust in the divine mercy, while they lived an ungodly life: nominal Christians, but dead in trespasses and sins.

The book of REVELATION is so called, because it consists chiefly of *Prophecies* revealed to John while living in banishment in the island of Patmos. He

was then near the close of his life, and the book relates to the church of Christ from that period to the end of time. Many of these prophecies being as yet unfulfilled, there is necessarily great difficulty in understanding the book.

This is a short account of each book of the New Testament, such as appeared advisable to give, in order that you may have a general idea of it: a longer account of each writer and his book will be given when I come to speak of each in detail. These books were extensively diffused, and read in every Christian society, and were valued and preserved with care by the first Christians; they were cited by Christian writers of the second, third and fourth centuries; and their genuineness is proved by those who lived at the same time with the Apostles themselves. The four Gospels and most of the other books were collected, either by one of the Apostles, or some of their disciples and successors, before the end of the first century; and the catalogue of sacred books furnished by the most ancient Christian writers of the third and fourth centuries agrees with that which is now received among Christians.

The books of the New Testament were, probably, all of them written originally in the *Greek* language, unless, perhaps, *St. Matthew's Gospel*, which was written by him *both* in *Hebrew* and *Greek*. I have, before, mentioned *the Septuagint*, or Greek translation of the Old Testament. Both Old and New Testaments were, afterwards, translated into *Latin**

* The *Old Italic* version was made in the second century, and was formed from copies of the different books translated by various hands from the Greek. But St. Jerome, in the fourth century, made a translation of the Old Testament, from the Hebrew into

by the early Christians ; and, while the Roman Empire subsisted in Europe, the reading of the Scriptures in the *Latin* tongue, which was the universal language of that empire, prevailed every where. The Roman empire, however, has fallen into decay, and many different monarchies have been erected on its ruins each speaking its own language. But, on the civil government being destroyed at Rome, there arose another, a strange mixture of civil and religious authority, in the Pope of Rome, who has claimed a spiritual power over every nation, as the head of the church ; but, being in his views more carnal than spiritual, more for this world than the next, that church has become more and more corrupt, and the heads of it, feeling that they did not live according to the word of God, were afraid of standing the test of Scripture, and ordered it to be read in *Latin*, even in those countries where the language was not spoken, nor understood ; and, at length, they forbade the reading of the Scriptures at all by the generality of the people. Amongst the corruptions of Popery, people had got to worship stocks and stones, that is images, instead of God ;—they prayed to dead saints, as if they were present every where, and able to hear them, and all-powerful to do what they asked,—they thought that the bread in the Sacrament was converted into Jesus Christ, and was to be worshipped,—they thought that men could be so good, as, not only to save themselves without Christ, but that they had goodness to spare for others, and which might be purchased,—they thought that there was a place

Latin, in order that the Western Christians, who used the Latin language only, might know the real meaning of the Hebrew ; and, thus, be the better qualified to engage in controversial discussions with the Jews. (See Horne's Introduction, Vol. II. p. 202, 203.)

called *purgatory*, where sinners, after death, were tormented in fire for a time, and from whence they could be redeemed by the prayers of as great sinners as themselves, if they paid them for it,—the Pope sold *indulgences*, that is, could grant people leave to commit sin, by paying him money; these, and many more things, as wicked and foolish, were the fruits of *popery*.

Things were in this state, when, in the *fourteenth century*, JOHN WICKLIFFE and others translated the Bible into English, and did all they could to make it known; but it was only a few copies that could be written out, (for printing was not then invented) and the Pope and his followers did all they could to destroy the copies, and prevent people reading them.

At length the Art of *Printing* was invented, and also that of making *paper* from linen rags; and, in the sixteenth century, the whole of the Bible was printed and published.

The first Bible, printed *by authority*, in England, was in the year 1540, in the reign of King Henry the Eighth; when, by a royal proclamation, every parish was obliged to set one of the copies in their Church, yet, two years after, the popish bishops got it again suppressed. It was restored under King Edward the Sixth, suppressed again in the reign of the *bloody* Queen Mary, (called so because she caused so many persons to be burnt for opposing popery;) and it was restored again in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, during whose long reign different translations and editions appeared.

There were objections of importance to be made against all these, and, at length, in the year 1604, in the reign of *King James the First*, fifty-four

learned men were appointed, by the King, to make a more exact translation. Only forty-seven of these, (owing, perhaps, to deaths, or to some absenting themselves,) completed the work, which was published in the year 1613, with a dedication to the King and a learned Preface; and it is commonly called *King James's Bible*, and is that which we now have, and is read by authority in all the Churches in Britain. This translation is, certainly, upon the whole, an excellent one; but, still, it must be acknowledged, that, with the increase of learning, which the art of printing has produced, the changes our language has undergone since that time, and our increasing acquaintance with eastern manners and customs, it might be very considerably improved, and a new translation, or at least a correction of the old one, is very desirable.

I am not aware that there is any thing farther, of consequence, or interest, to state to you respecting the Bible as we have it, unless it be the *division* of the books, or several writings, into *Chapters* and *verses*. The writings of the Hebrews and other eastern nations, as I told you in my last, were originally written on large sheets of linen, or paper made of the film of reeds, or on skins, or leather, and written without divisions, and rolled upon a stick, or roller. The division into chapters was made by Hugo de Sancto Caro, a Cardinal, who flourished about the year of Christ 1240. He wrote a comment on the Scriptures; and, likewise, what is called a *Concordance*, or kind of *Index*, for the more easy finding out any word, or passage. For this purpose, he found it necessary to divide the book into *sections*, and the sections into still smaller portions. These sections are the *Chapters* into which

the Bible hath ever since been divided, but the farther divisions of the chapters was *not* then into *verses* as it now is. Hugo's method of dividing them, was by placing the letters A, B, C, and so on, in the margin, at equal distances from each other. The division of the chapters into verses, as they now stand in our Bibles, had its origin from a famous Jewish Rabbi, about the year 1443. He, also, drew up a *Concordance*, to the Hebrew Bible, for the use of the Jews. But, though he followed Hugo in his division of the books into *Chapters*, he improved upon his invention as to the smaller divisions, and contrived that by *verses*: this being found to be a much more convenient method, it has been followed ever since. These divisions, though they are, in many respects, very useful, and especially for the purpose of *reference*; yet they have, on the other hand, some great disadvantages; and, especially, since our using the verses, or a few at a time, as *texts* to our discourses, we are too apt to consider them by themselves, and not with a sufficient attention to what goes before and what follows, with a comprehensive view of the subject. In some instances, too, these divisions might have been much more judiciously made; as the first verse of the seventh chapter of the second Epistle to the Corinthians should be read along with the sixth chapter; and there are several instances in Exodus, Isaiah, and other books, which I shall notice as I come to them.

Such is the History of the Bible, such is the origin of it, and such are the changes and alterations it has undergone, till we have it in *this form*, when even the poorest has it in his power to possess a copy for himself; and every one has it in his

power to be able to read, that he may know what is the will of God, what is his own state here, and what are his hopes for hereafter.

An anecdote, or two, may tend to give you a higher idea of the blessing we enjoy in this country, and at this time, in respect to the Bible.

In the reign of King Edward the First, in the year 1274, that is, about 550 years ago, before the art of printing was invented, the price of a Bible, with a commentary, fairly written upon parchment or vellum, was *thirty pounds*; and, at that time, the pay of a labouring man was only three-half-pence a day,—so that to purchase such a work would have cost him more than *fifteen years' labour*; and, now, a few shillings will buy a more convenient Bible,—the cheapest at little more than the value of *two days' labour*,—and the best that can be reasonably desired, at less than *a week's pay*. Thus, an over-hour in the morning, and another in the evening, would procure a labouring man one of the best Bibles in about five weeks.

In the reign of King Henry the Eighth, in the year 1543 (that is 281 years ago) an Act of Parliament was passed, “That no women, (except noblewomen and gentlewomen, who might read to themselves alone, and not to others,) nor artificers, 'prentices, journeymen, serving-men, husbandmen, nor labourers, were to read the Bible, or New Testament, in English, to himself, or to any others, privately or openly, upon pain of *one month's imprisonment*.” And, now,—blessed be God!—you have, not only the *liberty* of reading it, but you are *invited* to it, and every possible assistance given you. How thankful ought you to be for this! But the commonness of blessings makes them disregarded.

When it is dark, then we feel the value of light; “when the well is dry, then we know the worth of water.” The Roman Catholics, at this time, in Ireland, are objecting to the poor having the Bible. Should they ever again get the upper hand, what would be our state too in this country?

Let us, then, bless God, not only for having given his word to his unworthy creatures, but that we have it “so nigh” unto us. May we not say, in words like to those of Joshua to the Israelites, “What nation is there that hath THE BIBLE so nigh unto them?” (See Deut. iv. 7.) Let us, then, *use it* for the purpose for which it was given, as the fountain of our *faith* and *practice*: saying to ourselves, this must I *believe*, for it is so *written* in God’s word, this must I *do*, for it is so commanded in God’s Law. So shall we pass through this world as the children of God and of his Christ; and, in a glorious immortality, in the world to come, live for ever with them. *Amen, So be it.*

SERMON III.

INTRODUCTORY, NO. III.—ON THE INSPIRATION OF THE
SCRIPTURES.

2 TIMOTHY, iii. 16.

All Scripture is given by Inspiration of God.

I HAVE proposed, on Septuagesima Sunday, to begin a course of Sermons as a Commentary on the Holy Scripture, and to preface them by four Introductory Discourses, the First on the History of the Old Testament, the Second on the History of the New and of our English Bible, the Third on the Inspiration of the Scriptures, and the Fourth on the best manner of reading them. I have gone through the first two; and proceed, now, to consider the *Inspiration* of the Scriptures.

* Man is by nature ignorant and thoughtless; and, therefore, wants information and admonition. He is, also, prone to evil, and averse from good; and, therefore, wants restraint from the former, and incitement to the latter. Without the assistance which we receive one from another in these respects, we should be wicked and wretched beyond imagination. But, though we should be most defective in a state of solitude, yet we are very deplorably so, even

* This Discourse is taken, with some alteration, from the first of Archbishop Secker's Five Sermons on Scripture.

when joined to the best advantage in society. Many points of the utmost importance, relating both to our present and future condition, we either cannot discover at all, or not with certainty; many points, which we might discover, not even the wiser, much less the greater, part of men, have, in fact, known; and those which hardly any could fail to *perceive*, all have, more or less, failed to *regard*. Most of these things are plainly, men's own fault; and the rest are no imputation upon God. For, unquestionably, God may, with justice, place any of his creatures in as low a state, both of understanding and power of doing things, as he pleases; provided he requires from them, as he certainly will, only in proportion to what he hath given. And even his infinite goodness cannot oblige him to bestow on them greater favours, than his infinite wisdom sees to be proper; which it is no wonder should act upon reasons to us unsearchable. But, the less we have ground to expect, the more thankfully we ought to receive whatever notices, encouragements, or warnings, he may vouchsafe more immediately from himself.

Now we have in our hands a Book, which we call **THE BIBLE**, containing accounts of various communications made to mankind by their **CREATOR** from the beginning; but, principally, through the hands of *Moses* and the *Prophets*, of *Jesus Christ* and his *Apostles*, together with a great number of most important *consequences* arising therefrom. This Book is divided into two parts, called *the Old and the New Testament*; and both are affirmed, on good authority, to have been written by persons, who must, in the main, have known the truth, or falsehood, of what they said; none of whom have given

any cause to suspect their truth; but many, the strongest possible grounds, to rely upon it. These writers support the authority of the *doctrines* and *precepts* delivered there, by public *Miracles*, and express *Prophecies*, recounted there also. These *Miracles*, though they could never have been acknowledged if they had not been real, were, so far as we can learn, denied by no one, either at the time when they were said to have been done, or long after; and these *Prophecies* have, most of them, undeniably, been since fulfilled, nor do any appear to have failed. On the contrary, the Old Testament hath always been admitted as true and genuine by the whole Jewish nation; and the *Pentateuch*, or five books of Moses, in particular, used as *the Law* of their country. And as to the writers of the New Testament, it is still more certain,—that their works were published near the time, and in the places, where they affirm the events which they relate to have happened;—that they agree surprisingly well, though they were, in general, unlearned persons, and, plainly, had not concerted their story together;—that they led pious and virtuous lives;—and that they were willing to suffer death for the sake of their testimony. And, accordingly, the whole Christian church, from its rise, embraced their accounts with *a faith*, which, neither persecution, nor artifice, were able to overturn, or keep a belief in what they said from prevailing generally, though contrary to the favourite notions and sinful propensities of all mankind; which, alone, is a proof, that the *facts* related in them, even *the most miraculous*, were previously *known to be true*; and the *doctrines* the same which had already been taught by the Apostles, else Jews, Heathens and Christians must

have exclaimed against the authors, as publishers of falsehoods, and they never could have obtained belief.

Were we, therefore, to consider the Scriptures merely as compositions of *excellent men*, well informed, and faithfully informing us, in the best manner they could, of what it most concerns us to know, we must allow them to be a most valuable blessing, a treasure unspeakably superior to all the other remains of antiquity. But this is much too low an esteem of them: they were written, moreover, under the especial direction of HEAVEN, and *that* for an end no less important than a full supply of our spiritual wants, for “all Scripture is” of *Divine Authority*, or, in St. Paul’s language, “given by Inspiration of God:” a position extremely requisite to be understood in its true sense, and established on its proper foundation. For some persons have held it to signify, that every sentence and word was dictated from above; and, consequently, have made room, without intending it, for as many specious objections, as there are appearances of any thing, which,—in respect of clearness, elegance, order, strength,—exceeds not human power, or comes short of absolute perfection. Others, partly, to guard against this danger, and, partly, to excuse notions of their own, which are contrary to Scripture, have imagined that being *inspired* meant little more (at least in relation to the historical and doctrinal books) than being indued with a large measure of general pious intention; so that, continuing to call themselves Christians, and professing a high respect for the Sacred Writers as good men, they have thought themselves justified in doubting,

or even disbelieving, almost as much as they please, of what the Scriptures teach.

By the word SCRIPTURE, in the Gospels and Epistles, is intended that Collection of *writings* which the Church acknowledged for its rule of life and manners. When our Apostle sent this Epistle to Timothy, several parts of the *New Testament* were not published, and scarcely any had spread very far; so that he must mean, by *Scripture*, chiefly, if not solely, the *Old Testament*. But the Books of the *New*, from their first appearance, obtained the same title every where. St. Peter (2 Ep. iii. 16,) gives it, by the plainest implication, to what St. Paul wrote; and, doubtless, what he, and the rest of the twelve, wrote, equally deserved it. *Inspiration* is *any particular influence of God upon the mind*; whence we pray, in the Collect at the beginning of the Communion service, that he would “cleanse our hearts by the *inspiration* of his Holy Spirit.” But, in the case before us, it must signify such influence, as will be effectual for the purpose of writing such books. And of this there may be various *degrees* requisite; and, therefore, granted according to the variety of circumstances. *Moving* a person inwardly to *undertake* the work is one degree. *Superintending* him during the writing of it, so as to preserve him from making any *considerable* error, or omission, is another. *Preserving* him from *all* mistake, or omission, even the *least*, is a higher still. Enabling him to *express himself* in a manner loftier, clearer, more convincing, or more affecting, than he would have done otherwise, is yet a farther step. *Suggesting* to him also the *matter*, which he shall deliver, goes beyond the former, especially if he was unacquainted

with it till then. And putting into his mouth *the very words* he shall use, is the completest guidance that can be.

Now, it is not to be supposed, that God hath done *all* these things in *every part* of Scripture ; but so many in each, as were needful. That he directed *Moses* to write his Laws, (Exod. xxxiv. compare xxiv. 4. Deut. xxxi. 9, 22.) and *Isaiah* (viii. 1. xxx. 8.) and *Ezekiel* (xliii. 11.) and *Habakkuk* (ii. 2.) Part, at least, of their Prophecies ; and *Jeremiah* the whole of his, (xxx. 2. xxxvi. 2, 28.) and *St. John* the Book of Revelation, (i. 11, 19.) they themselves positively assure us ; and, by like reasoning, we may presume it to be the same with the rest : nor can we doubt, but that, writing in obedience to his command, they wrote so as he approved. On some occasions, perhaps, they wanted, and, therefore, had, but little, or no, extraordinary assistance. Without this, the Historians amongst them might relate several facts from their own personal knowledge, others from authentic records ; and Moses might receive his accounts of the earliest ages from undoubted tradition. For tradition was much longer credible, when there were but few things to commit to memory, and there was no other way of preserving them, and two or three generations lasted many centuries*. The authors of all the books might be trusted, very commonly, to use their own style and method, in which, accordingly, there is much diversity. And, yet, amidst all this, the superintending care of God might sufficiently provide against their

* See this subject mentioned again in the early part of the fifth Sermon.

misleading into error and sin, or their omitting to instruct, in any thing essential, those whom they were appointed “to make wise unto salvation.” (2 Tim. iii. 15.)

That he *hath* superintended them thus far, is evident from the *necessity* of his doing it. The Patriarchal, Jewish, and Christian Revelations, which are contained, with their principal evidences, in these books, could not be known with certainty, by the people, after some time, otherwise than by means of them; though they might, at first, learn them by word of mouth. And, therefore, to prevent his gracious intention towards every succeeding generation from being rendered of no effect, undoubtedly God would take care, that the Scripture should teach us infallibly what he required us to believe and do.

But this is not all, he must have interposed much farther. We find passages, throughout, so sublime, so moving, of such force upon the heart and conscience,—yet without the least appearance of labour and study for that purpose,—indeed the design of the whole is so noble, so well suited to the sad condition of human kind,—the morals have in them such purity and dignity,—the doctrines are, many of them, so much above reason, yet, all of them, so reconcileable with it,—the expression is so majestic, yet familiarized with such easy simplicity,—that, the more we read and study these books, with pious dispositions and judicious attention, the more we shall see and feel of the work of God in them; and, without fixing on *this*, or *that* particular text, be fully satisfied, on the whole, that no *mere men*, much less unlearned men, as several of the writers were,

could ever approach to that perfection, (far superior to that of the most admired heathens,*) without being raised much above themselves by supernatural aid. But, then, if we consider also, the accurate agreement and correspondence of the several parts, though of very different times, under very different dispensations of religion, and scenes of worldly affairs; that numerous and various as they are, they nevertheless unite into one consistent and connected scheme, and the more evidently so, the stricter inquiry is made into it. Such harmony must proceed from *one original plan* formed in the mind of the Great Creator and Ruler of all things, *parts* of which only were communicated to the several publishers of it; yet each of them was influenced from above to so punctual a fulfilment of his own respective trust, that what he *said* perfectly agreed with that of which he was *ignorant*, till, at length, the whole was completed by our blessed Redeemer, “in whom all the building, fitly framed together, grew up into a holy temple in the Lord.” (Eph. ii. 21.)

But, after this general view, let us enter into some particulars. *The Law of Moses*, if at all from God, was dictated by God, for it affirms itself to be so. The contents of the *prophetic books* are, foretellings of events to come, and commissions to deliver such and such instructions to the people. These, also, if true, (and the *fulfilling* of the prophecies proves that they were) must have been suggested by God. One of the prophets, Daniel, de-

* In Simpson's *Sacred Literature* the finest passages of heathen authors are compared with those of the Holy Scriptures, and the superiority of the latter very forcibly exhibited.

clares, that "he heard, but understood not." (xii. 8.) Others of them St. Peter describes, as "diligently searching" into the times and circumstances, to which their messages related. (1 Pet. i. 11.)

And, probably, they all apprehended but imperfectly the meaning of a great part of what they foretold. Now, we may be certain, that God would effectually incline them to deliver these, by using the *very words* which they received. And, in the rest, they would, of course, endeavour it, and have their memories strengthened, as far as needed to perform it. Some revelations, indeed, were made to them, not by words, but by *visible appearances*, or impressions on their imagination. Here, again, we cannot question, but they were enabled to relate them in proper terms. Farther yet, many of the Psalms are plainly prophetic, and even the historical books contain prophecies: these must, also, have been suggested by God. The very histories are, some of them, such as, in all likelihood, the writers did not know, of themselves, or from other men: God must, therefore, have communicated them too. And from the beginning to the end of Scripture, are so many things of such exalted excellency, that we may well say of the writer, concerning each of them, as our Lord did to St. Peter, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. xvi. 17.)

However, as we Christians are most immediately concerned with the *New Testament*; and proving the divine authority of *that* will alone prove the divine authority of the *Old*, which is every where asserted in it, I shall dwell upon this point more largely.

The *Evangelists* give us, not only a circumstantial

account of our Saviour's journeys, miracles, sufferings, resurrection, but frequent narrations of his *discourses* likewise; some of them very *long*, all of them together making up nearly half the Gospels; and St. John, who wrote the last, hath the most of them. Were we, who have heard and read them frequently, now to read one of the larger again, we should scarcely be able to repeat it, without considerable *omissions*, nay without *variations* altering the sense. The Disciples, at the time, were far from comprehending them all: it is no where affirmed that they wrote any of them down till several years after; probably, some of the Gospels were not published within twenty, or thirty, years, or more. Yet a small failure in representing the doctrine of their master, his vindications of himself, his predictions of future events, nay any thing of importance that he did, or that befell him, (especially considering how many things were foretold concerning him) might have been extremely detrimental to Christianity. And, therefore, assuredly, they would never have dared to specify such a variety of particulars, both said and done; or, if they had, could never have agreed so well in them, without *Divine Assistance*. But they well knew that they *should have it*, and that they *had it*.

Our Lord, before his death, promised his disciples that "the Holy Ghost should teach them all things, and bring all things to their remembrance, whatsoever he had said to them," (John xiv. 26) and guide them into all truth." (John xvi. 13.) He assured them, "it was expedient for them, that he should go away," because, till then, he could not, consistently with the purposes of Infinite Wisdom, send the Spirit to them (John xvi. 7.), whence it

must follow, that, by the aid of the Spirit, they were as secure from error, as if they had (what, after they were dispersed to preach the Gospel, was impossible) Christ bodily present with them, to ask him concerning the things which they had heard, or seen. He told them, further, that, when they should “be brought before governors and kings, to bear testimony” for him, “it should be given them, in that same hour, what they should speak: for,” saith he, “it is not *ye* that speak, but the Spirit of your Father, which speaketh in you.” (Matt. x. 18—20. Luke xii. 11, 12.) And they certainly *wanted*, and, therefore, would *have*, as much Divine Assistance, when they wrote *books*, which God foresaw (whether they did or not) must be the only standing rule of Christian faith for ever, as when they *spoke* occasionally before a heathen magistrate.

The assurances which Christ vouchsafed to the Apostles, we read, were fully made good. After his resurrection, he said to them, “As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you:” then he breathed on them, and said, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost.” (John xx. 21, 22). After his ascension, they were filled with his gifts yet more abundantly, and “spake with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance;” (Acts ii. 4.) discerned the secrets of men’s hearts, foretold things to come, performed the greatest miracles, had frequent revelations from above, seem to have done nothing of importance without an especial guidance. Surely, then, they, who were thus under God’s direction, did not write the New Testament without it! They, who confirmed, in this manner, what they taught, were not capable of leaving unmentioned any fundamental *truth*, and yet less of teaching any error!

Now, two of these, *Matthew* and *John*, Apostles and companions of our Lord, are also Evangelists. The latter was peculiarly beloved by our Saviour, while on earth ; and, afterwards, saw in vision, and heard from his mouth, and that of an Angel, all that is contained in the Book of *Revelation* : whence we, not only infer its infallible authority, but are strongly confirmed in our belief, that the Spirit of Jesus was present with him, likewise, in writing his *Gospel* and *Epistles*. The two other Evangelists, indeed, *Mark* and *Luke*, were not Apostles ; but their works were approved by *St. Peter* and *St. Paul*, who were ; and all the *four Gospels* have ever been held in equal esteem. The book of the *Acts of the Apostles* is a sequel, or continuation, of *St. Luke's Gospel*, which the writer would not fail to lay before the same Apostle, who had inspected his Gospel ; especially as it principally relates to him, and ends at the time when they were together at *Rome*, and at full leisure to revise it jointly.

It is true *St. Paul* himself was *not* one of the *twelve*. But he “ was not a whit behind the very chiefest of them ; ” (2 Cor. xi. 5.) being miraculously called to “ see that Just One, to hear the voice of his mouth,” (Acts xxii. 14.) and to “ receive ” his Gospel, “ not of Man, but by the ” immediate “ revelation of Jesus Christ.” (Gal. i. 12.) Certainly, then, he was not suffered, either to misrepresent, or suppress, any part of it, whether speaking or writing ; or to deliver any thing, as comprehended in it, which was not. But let us hear what he saith of his own preaching : “ We speak the things given unto us of God, not in the words, which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth.” (1 Cor. ii. 12, 13.) “ When ye receive the Word of

God, which ye heard of us, ye received it, not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the Word of God." (1 Thes. ii. 13.) Let us hear what he saith of his own Epistles: "If any man think himself a Prophet, or spiritual," that is endued with supernatural gifts, "let him acknowledge, that the things which I write unto you, are the commandments of the Lord." (1 Cor. xiv. 37.) "He, therefore, that despiseth, despiseth not Man, but God, who hath, also, given unto us his Holy Spirit." (1 Thes. iv. 8.) Yet we may be confident, that he "did not boast of himself beyond his measure," (2 Cor. x. 13.) or dare "to speak of any thing, which Christ had not wrought by him, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed, by mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God." (Rom. xv. 18, 19.) And, observe, he doth not, after all this, any where exalt himself above the other Apostles; but he places all the Apostles above the Prophets: (1 Cor. xii. 28.) which, likewise, in effect, St. Peter doth, when, having first exhorted Christians to "be mindful of the words, which were spoken before by the holy Prophets," he adds, in yet stronger terms, and "of the commandment of us, the Apostles of our Lord and Saviour." (2 Pet. iii. 2.) *St. John*, also, in his first Epistle, uses language, in general, of the same high import: "He that knoweth God, heareth us: he that is not of God, heareth not us. Hereby know we the Spirit of Truth, and the Spirit of Error." (1 John iv. 6.) Could such eminent saints, could any religious and humble, or commonly honest, men, provoke God, and attempt to deceive their fellow-creatures, by making such claims as these, without foundation? Would not he instantly have withdrawn his gifts from them? Would not their en-

viers and rivals,—for such there were,—have exposed them? Would not all Christians, by common consent, have rejected them? Certainly they would; yet, certainly, they did just the contrary.

The two only writers of the New Testament, whom I have not yet named particularly, are *St. James* and *St. Jude*; of whom it may be sufficient to observe, that they were both Apostles, and near kinsmen of our Lord; and, therefore, might well expect the same regard with the rest; which, by the whole tenor of their Epistles, they appear to do, though without demanding it so expressly, for which they had, probably, no occasion.

Still it must be observed, that some Christians at *Antioch* disputed one part of what *Paul* and *Barnabas* taught there; and, afterwards, when the Apostles held a council at Jerusalem upon it, certain Pharisees, who were believers, debated the same point. (Acts xv. 1, &c.) But it is not surprising, if new converts, full of old prejudices, were backward to part with them, where the honour of the Law seemed to be impaired by it, considering how obstinately refractory their forefathers had been to known Prophets and to Moses himself. However, being heard with great condescension, and, then, instructed by St. James and St. Peter, they submitted. And it is to be observed, farther, in the decree made on this occasion, where the Apostles say, “It hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us,” they join “the elders and brethren” with them. But so doth St. Paul join one, or other, with him, in no less than eight of his Epistles: (1 Cor. i. 1. 2 Cor. i. 1. Gal. i. 1, 2. Philip. i. 1. Col. i. 1. 1 Thes. i. 1. 2 Thes. i. 1. Philem. 1.) and, in both cases, the meaning plainly is, not to allow them equal authority, but merely to express their agreement.

Indeed, the Apostles themselves were not led “into all truth” at once; but this is very consistent with being secured from error. They were, also, liable to act imprudently; as St. Peter did, when he separated himself from the Gentiles at Antioch, fearing to offend the believing Jews, for which St. Paul blamed him (Gal. ii. 11, &c.); and, as, perhaps, even Paul, too, did, when not knowing the High Priest, he reprov'd him so severely, though deservedly. (Acts xxiii. 2, &c.) But there was not the least falsehood asserted by either; and the behaviour of both turned to the advantage of Christianity. Some have objected to the inspiration of St. Paul, that, in one place, he saith only “He *thinks* he hath the Spirit of God.” (1 Cor. vii. 40.) But this *ironical*, seeming-doubt was designed to imply the strongest affirmation, and to put his adversaries to shame. They object, also, that, in the same chapter, he distinguishes the directions, which Christ had given in person, from his own. (1 Cor. vii. 12.) And He doth so: but what is this more, than a most amiable expression of humility and respect to his dear Lord? It hath, likewise, been said, that, when he saith to the Corinthians, “We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,” (1 Cor. xv. 51.) and, again, to the Thessalonians, “For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we, which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not *prevent*” that is go to Heaven *before*, “those which are asleep;” (1 Thes. iv. 15.) he meant, that the general resurrection was to be in his day, and, therefore, that he erred. But this, certainly, was not his meaning, for, in his second Epistle to the Thessalonians, (ii. 1, &c.) written the same year, he cautions them against misunderstanding, (as it

seems they, some of them, had done,) what he said, on that head, in his first; and mentions things which were to happen between his own days and the resurrection, and which must take some time. In other Epistles, too, he speaks of his own dying, first as *likely*, (Phil. i. 20.) then as *certain*, to happen soon. (2 Tim. iv. 6.) And, therefore, by the word *we*, in the places objected, he meant only in general, *we*, or such of *us Christians*; not designing to intimate, that *he himself* should be one of the number.

Objections have been raised against various passages of Holy Scripture, besides the above-mentioned. Some have been thought hard to reconcile with the moral attributes of God, some with each other. But I shall hope to explain these to your satisfaction as we go through the Scriptures. In the mean time, it is sufficient to say, that reasonable answers have, already, been given to them; that many of them, which, once, appeared to be of the greatest importance, have been fully shewn to be of none: from whence, alone, we may justly presume, that, whatever is wanting to clear up the rest, will be supplied, in time, by the blessing of God on the continued labours of pious and learned men; and that, instead of thinking *meanly* of the *Scriptures*, we ought to think *humbly* of *ourselves*, and be convinced, that, in these points, *we* do not understand them; and whatever may be dark, or doubtful, or seem exceptionable, there is abundantly sufficient, clearly and indisputably written, to answer the end of all; that “we may believe, that Jesus is THE CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD, and, that, believing, we may have life through his name.” (John xx. 31.)

SERMON IV.

INTRODUCTORY, NO. IV.—ON THE BEST MANNER OF STUDY-
ING THE SCRIPTURES.

2 TIMOTHY, iii. 16, 17.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God ; and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness ; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

AGREEABLY to the plan which I have already proposed to you, I am to proceed, this day, to lay before you the great excellence of the Bible, and the best manner of studying it. This I shall do by

I. Setting before you The value of the Bible.

II. The Importance of habitually studying the Bible.

III. The necessity of Divine Assistance to enable us properly to understand the Bible.

IV. Practical Rules for the Study of the Bible, and

V. An exhortation to persons in different stations of Life on the Duty of studying the Bible.

I. Then, on the value of the Bible.

To begin with a similitude :

* Suppose a person, compelled to quit a foreign country, were invited to return home, to receive a

* This Discourse is chiefly taken from Bickersteth's Scripture Help, and from a Tract, amongst the Tracts of the Religious Tract Society, intitled "Attention to the Scriptures urged and directed," which is, likewise, abridged and altered from Bickersteth.

large possession which his Father had promised him. Suppose him to be entirely unacquainted with the road he has to go, but knows that it is often rugged, difficult and dangerous ; that there are many false guides to mislead him, and many enemies to encounter ; and that, thus, he will be exposed, not only to the loss of the promised possession, but of every thing he has, and even of life itself, what would be such a person's first enquiries ? Some such as these, undoubtedly,—Where can I get a sure direction ? Is there any one who will defend me from my enemies ? With what delight would he hear,—Your Father has sent you a plain, full, and particular direction, and has provided an all-sufficient protector. How diligently would he be looking at this *direction* as he went along, and how entirely would he trust his *Protector* !

My brethren, such a journey is the Christian's life : God is his Father : heaven is his home ; eternal bliss is the promised possession ; Christ is the all-sufficient protector, the captain of our salvation, who has himself gone the road, and conquered every enemy, and who, now, guards and defends as many as commit themselves to him ; and THE BIBLE, with the help of the Holy Spirit, affords a sure direction to God, to heaven, to everlasting bliss.

“ The testimony of the Lord is *sure*, making wise the simple.” (Psalm xix. 7.) By means of the Bible, God himself “ directs our paths.” In all important points it is so *plain*, “ that he who runs may read.” (Habak. ii. 2.) It is, also, so *full* and *particular*, that you will find in it something adapted to your most perplexing doubts, and to guide you aright through your greatest difficulties. Its fulness speaks its Divine Author. This will shew you,

II. The importance of habitually studying the Bible.

The possession of a Bible, *if it be rightly used*, is one of the greatest privileges and blessings that can be conferred upon us. Every thing, however, depends upon the *use* we make of it. If a person is sick of a dangerous distemper, the best remedy in the world would do him no good, unless he took it. So it is here ; your Bible will do you no good, unless you use it. Nay, it would have been better for you never to have had a Bible, than to have one, and neglect to use it ; because the Bible is *a talent* intrusted to your charge, for the improvement, or neglect, of which you must account :—besides, to disregard it, as if it were of no value, is a high affront to the great God who gave it. Suppose a parent wrote a letter to a child at a distance, full of affectionate admonitions and kind promises, and the child never opened it, or only read a line now and then ; what an unworthy part such a child would act ! Just so are *we* acting, if we neglect that *Book* which our heavenly Father has sent to *us*. Let us all reflect, then, that,

1. *The study of the Scripture is plainly commanded.* Thus Christ says, “Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they testify of me ;” (John v. 39.) “Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.” (Luke xi. 28.) and, again, St. Paul says, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom.” (Col. iii. 16.)

2ndly. *This study has always been the practice of pious men.* Timothy had known the Scriptures from a child. (2 Tim. iii. 15.) Apollos was “mighty in the Scriptures.” (Acts xviii. 24.) It appears from the cxixth Psalm, that David was continually study-

ing the Scriptures; and he says of the righteous man, "His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his Law doth he meditate day and night." (Psal. i. 2.) O that this were the character of all who call themselves Christians; that they would not only *read* their Bibles, but *continually meditate* upon them!

3. This study, in a dependence on the help of the Holy Spirit, is *necessary to the attainment of that knowledge which the Bible imparts*. "The Scriptures," says Scott, "are a treasure of divine knowledge, which can never be exhausted. The things, that are absolutely necessary to salvation are few, simple, and obvious to the meanest capacity, provided it be attended by a humble, teachable disposition: but the most learned, acute, and diligent student cannot, in the longest life, obtain an entire knowledge of this one volume. The more deeply he works the mine, the richer and more abundant he finds the ore: new light continually beams from this source of heavenly knowledge, to direct his conduct, and illustrate the ways of God, and the ways of men; and he will at last leave the world confessing, that the more he studied the Scriptures, the fuller conviction he had of his own ignorance, and of their inestimable value*."

[The great Mr. Locke said of the Bible, "Therein are contained the words of eternal life. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter†."]

And the great Sir William Jones said, "I have carefully and regularly perused these Holy Scriptures, and am of opinion, that the volume indepen-

* Preface to the Commentary on the Bible, § viii.

† See Buck's Anecdotes, vol. i. p. 230.

dently of its divine origin, contains more true sublimity, more exquisite beauty, purer morality, more important history, and finer strains both of poetry and eloquence, than could be collected from all other books, in whatever age or language they may have been written. The two parts of which the Scriptures consist, are connected by a chain of compositions, which bear no resemblance in form or style to any that can be produced from the stores of Grecian, Indian, Persian, or even Arabian learning: the antiquity of those compositions no man doubts; and the unstrained application of them to events long subsequent to their publication, is a solid ground of belief, that they were genuine compositions, and consequently inspired *."

4. *This study is requisite to the enjoyment of those advantages which flow from the religion of the Bible; namely Faith, Conversion, Sanctification, and Hope.* Hence, when the Bereans "received the word with all readiness of mind," they "*searched* the Scriptures *daily*," and "therefore many of them *believed*." (Acts xvii. 11.) David says, "Thy Law is perfect, *converting* the soul." (Psalm x. 7.) Jesus Christ prays for his people; "*Sanctify* them through thy truth: thy word is truth." (John xvii. 17.) And St. Paul says, "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we, through patience, and comfort of the Scriptures, might have *hope*." (Rom. xv. 4.) "Beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor. iii. 18.) Reading the Scriptures is one of the great means of bringing our

* Lord Teignmouth's Life of Sir William Jones, 8vo., p. 454.

souls near to God, and enjoying communion with him. “While in prayer, *we speak to God*: in the *Scriptures, God speaks to us.*”

5. *This study, therefore, brings real happiness.* You have *not* found happiness in *the world*. How often have you been compelled to *feel*, if not to acknowledge, the vanity and emptiness of *all worldly good*; try then to find happiness in THE BIBLE. You will not be disappointed *there*; it will lead you to that “fountain of living waters, of which whosoever drinketh shall not thirst again.” (Jerem. ii. 13. xvii. 13. John iv. 13, 14.) “Great peace have they that love God’s law.” (Psalm cxix. 165.) The Thesalonians received the word preached to them “with joy of the Holy Ghost.” (1 Thes. i. 6.) The word of Christ will often cause your hearts, like those of the disciples going to Emmaus, to burn within you. (Luke xxiv. 32.) As “faith cometh by hearing,” (Rom. x. 17.) you will, thus, not only be persuaded that God’s promises will be fulfilled, but you will see your own interest in them, and exult in the hope of boundless bliss beyond the grave.

Do not, however, be discouraged, if these consequences do not immediately and palpably appear. Your progress may be real, though slow and hardly perceptible. The new-born babe daily receives nourishment, yet it does not instantly grow up to manhood, but gradually passes through the stages of childhood and youth; so it is here. Be not disappointed, if reading the Bible should sometimes appear *a task*, and your corrupt nature should be ready to call it a *dry, dull and tedious study*; still persevere in it, remembering that nothing valuable is gained without self-denial. The more constantly

you read it in a right spirit, the more comfort and pleasure, profit and happiness, you will find.

When a man, by much patient studying of his Bible, has taken his sentiments and principles simply from that source, he has the satisfaction of being able to say, “ I rest on a solid foundation ; I did not take my opinions from this man, or the other, but *from THE BIBLE alone* ; I have *Thus saith the Lord* for ‘ The reason of the hope that is in me.’ ” Who can describe the value of this persuasion in the hour of temptation and trial !

Some, however, may say, “ I am satisfied of the truth of all this ; but I am poor and unlearned : the Bible, too, is a large book ; and, when I begin to read it, I find many things which I cannot understand.” Let me, however, ask you, Are you not every day labouring to provide for yourself and your family ? Now, in the beginning of the week, you do not say, “ My labour is too hard for me, I will sit down and do nothing ;” because you know, that, if you did, yourself and your family might starve. But, remember your immortal soul is of far more value than your perishing body. Your soul wants food, and this food is to be obtained by patient labour in reading, hearing, and meditating upon your Bible. Besides you did not learn your business, or your trade, at once ; nor can you learn the whole truth contained in your Bible at once. The Bible is, indeed, a large book, but it consists of many small books ; each of these is complete in itself, such as Genesis, the Psalms, the Prophecies of Isaiah, each of the Four Gospels, and so on. Read one of these smaller books through, before you begin another ; and, by degrees, (observing the rules I am about to

give) the most ignorant may get a very considerable knowledge of the Bible. But I proceed to shew you,

III. *The necessity of Divine Assistance to enable us properly to understand the Bible.*

Of all the works of creation *the sun* is the most glorious and splendid, the most enlivening and useful: it, not only enlightens the world, but cherishes and gives health and strength to all things, it causes universal joy and gladness of heart; it renews the face of the whole earth, and “there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.” (Psalm xix. 6.)

So is *the Word of God*: it is a bright and glorious *light* shining in a dark world; but “the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not.” (John i. 5.) The world lieth in darkness; men are dead in trespasses and sins; and, while they continue in that state, they can no more perceive the real glory of the Bible, than a blind man can perceive the light of the sun, or a dead man its warmth. Hence we may learn our need of the help of the Holy Spirit. When this is given, “the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear will live.” (John v. 25.) Observe, then,

1. *The express declarations of Scripture.* When David prays, “Lord open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law,” (Psalm cxix. 18.) he shews his sense of the need of God’s help fully to understand divine truth. St. Paul also plainly says, “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither *can* he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” (1 Cor. ii. 14.) Observe, again,

2. *The promises of divine teaching.*—Our Lord

says, "When the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all truth." (John xvi. 13.) And, though this promise was, in the first place, peculiarly applicable to the Apostles, as it respected their divine mission; yet it comprehends the more lasting operations of the Holy Spirit. Our Lord says of this Spirit, "The Father shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you *for ever*." (John xiv. 16.) And, again, "They shall be *all* taught of God." (John vi. 45.) This will appear farther, from

3. *The experience of Christians.*—How dark were the minds of the disciples respecting the Prophecies relating to Christ, till "he opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures." (Luke xxiv. 45.) Lydia was just as ignorant and careless as other people, till "the Lord opened her heart to attend to the things spoken by Paul." (Acts xvi. 14.) *I proceed, then,

IV. To lay down some *Practical Rules for the study of the Bible.*

1. *Whenever, then, you open the Bible, never forget to pray, that the Holy Ghost may open your understanding.* Let prayer, also, be mixed with your reading, and prayer when you have done; fervent, earnest and repeated entreaties for the help of the Holy Spirit to enlighten your mind, and bring home to your heart all that you read.

But, while the necessity of having the assistance of this Divine Teacher is thus strongly and absolutely insisted upon, let it be clearly understood,

* This discourse being very long, as the delivery of the whole would occupy above an hour, it might, perhaps, with advantage, be divided into two at this place.

that the Holy Spirit does not guide to any doctrines contrary to the will of God, as revealed in his Word ; nor can we expect his guidance without prayer, and the use of the other means and helps which he has given us for understanding the Scriptures.

2. *Mix faith with all you read.* The Gospel is as *food* ; and *faith* receives, eats and digests it, and thus it becomes nourishing. One who mixes faith with what he reads, accepts the mercy offered in God's word, and applies it to *himself* with suitable affections. The word preached by Moses, St. Paul says, (Heb. iv. 2.) did not profit, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. Let *your* faith be a lively working faith, inducing you, not only to believe that all you read is true, but earnestly to seek an interest in the promises, to escape the threatenings, and to obey the commands, however difficult they may seem. In reading the Bible you should, not only *desire*, but *expect*, great spiritual benefits ; you should, not only pray for, but depend upon, the teaching of the Holy Spirit. You may confidently *expect* what God has *promised*, as far as is needful for your salvation.

3. *Read the Bible with great reverence, and with a humble and teachable mind.* The Thessalonians believed the Gospel, not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, and they derived benefit accordingly ; for it did effectually work in them that believed," (1 Thes. ii. 13.) If you come to the Bible with a disposition to *cavil* and *find fault*, or with notions of your own, formed before hand, you are not likely to get much advantage by reading it ; but, if you come sensible of your ignorance, with a readiness to receive the impressions of divine truth, and with a childlike dependence upon God, you

shall not come in vain. Remember, Christ says, "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein." (Mark x. 15. Luke xviii. 17.) Again, a tender and broken spirit is an admirable preparative for this study; and, therefore, it is said by God, in the Prophet Isaiah, (lxvi. 2.) "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word."

4. *Read the Bible with patient meditation, and with self-application, and self-examination.* We ought to dwell upon the passage we read, and patiently to turn it over in our minds, especially if it relates to the doctrine and practice of the Gospel, or to the experience of believers. Thus, when St. Peter says, "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," (2 Peter iii. 18.) ask yourself, "Do *I* grow in grace, and in this knowledge of Jesus Christ?" Your Bible will furnish you with the best hints for going through this very important duty. Your progress, in this mode of study, may seem slow, but you will thereby gain far more real information and knowledge, than by a hasty perusal; and you surely do not read it as a matter of form, or merely to be able to say that you have read so much. Many persons have found it useful to chuse a verse, or more, in the morning, for meditating upon through the day.

5. *Read the Bible with a heart devoted to God.* Have a fixed determination to give up every thing the Bible condemns, and to do the whole will of God. Keep in mind our Lord's direction, and depend upon his promise, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." (John vii. 17.) Renounce, then, your own will and

affections, and devote yourself simply to the will and service of your Maker. Determine, in a better strength than your own, to “have respect unto *all* God’s commandments,” and this will remove a thousand difficulties in understanding and embracing the truth. The great doctrines of the Bible, the guilt and corruption of man, free justification by faith, and the need of the Holy Spirit, will be readily received by one who has duly attended to this rule. “In studying the Word of God, digest it under these two heads, either as removing obstructions which keep God and thee asunder, or as supplying some uniting power to bring God and thee together.” Augustine says, “In the Scriptures, our eyes see with more or less clearness, accordingly as we die more or less to this present world; and, on the contrary, in proportion as we live to this world, we do not discern spiritual things.” “I use the Scriptures,” says Boyle, “not as an arsenal, to be resorted to only for arms and weapons to defend a party, or defeat its enemies; but as a matchless temple, where I delight to be, to contemplate the beauty, the symmetry, and the magnificence of the structure, and increase my awe to the Being there preached and adored.”

These are the rules which relate chiefly to the state of the *reader’s mind*. I, now, proceed to some relating to the *manner* of study.

6. *Read the Bible habitually, and, if practicable, regularly at stated periods.* Read it according to your opportunities with diligence and perseverance. The Bereans are commended for searching the Scriptures *daily*. (Acts xvii. 11.) Let me intreat you, if you can, to make it a rule to read some part, if it be only *one verse*, every day. Most of you might

read much more. The Bible always affords something *new*, something *we had not seen before*. Self-denial will be required to effect this, and you will have many temptations to neglect it; but persevere, and you will be abundantly rewarded. Remember, the welfare of your *souls* is at stake. Much more knowledge and edification will be gained by this constant, conscientious, and regular method of reading the Bible, than by reading it occasionally, in a hasty, uncertain manner, and in detached parts, as your fancy suggests at the moment.

7. *Read one book through before you begin another, and read the whole Bible through.* You will, thus, see the connection between one part and another; though you will, properly, give those parts most of your time and attention, which are most practical, such as the Psalms, Proverbs and the New Testament; yet read the whole of the Bible; one part throws light upon another; and you will, thus, obtain an enlarged view of divine truth. There is in the Bible “milk for babes, and strong meat” (1 Cor. iii. 2.; Heb. v. 12—14.) for those of a full and mature age.

8. *Compare one part of Scripture with another.* We are directed by St. Paul to “compare spiritual things with spiritual.” (1 Cor. ii. 13.) God, in compassion to our ignorance and want of a teachable disposition, gives “precept upon precept, and line upon line; here a little and there a little.” (Isaiah xxviii. 10.) What is obscure in one place, is made plain and easy in another. Hence, what some have complained of, as being *a repetition*, is a great advantage to the patient and diligent reader of the Bible. Attention to this rule will lead you to see the harmony and consistency of Scripture. You

will often be equally surprised and delighted with the fulness of a text, and with striking agreements not before noticed; you will, also, find this a great help for fixing the Scriptures in your memory.

9. *Have respect to the general plan of revealed truth, in interpreting Scripture.* Be careful not to interpret any obscure text so as to make it contradict a plain one. For instance, those texts which speak of God as having bodily members, must not be understood literally; but as intended, in condescension to our weakness, to help our conceptions of those powers and perfections which are a part of his spiritual excellencies; for it is, elsewhere, said, "God is a Spirit." (John iv. 24.) Those texts which tell us, "that, "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound," (Rom. v. 20.) and that "we are justified freely by the grace of God," (Rom. iii. 24. Titus iii. 7.) must not be understood as authorizing sin; (which would contradict the whole tendency of Scripture;) but as condemning self-righteousness, magnifying the love of God, and shewing the way of acceptance with him. And those texts which say, "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord;" (Heb. xii. 14.) "Fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man;" (Eccles. xi. 13.) are not to be understood as authorizing the notion of salvation by *works*; but as shewing the character and happiness of the converted sinner, who is "created in Christ Jesus unto good works:" (Eph. ii. 10.) holiness is a part of his salvation, and not the procuring-cause of it. It is sometimes necessary to urge particular texts upon different persons, according to their prevailing tendency. Is a man "turning the grace of God into lasciviousness?" (Jude 4.) To him the doctrine of the absolute

need of sanctification by the Spirit of God, must be enforced. Is another man "trusting in himself that he is righteous?" (Luke xviii. 9.) To him the doctrine of free justification by Christ alone, "without the deeds of the law," (Rom. iii. 28.) must be held up; and he must be warned, that "Christ shall profit him nothing," (Gal v. 2.) while he "seeks to be justified by the law." We must not fancy, because one text, at first sight, *appears* to contradict another, that, therefore, it does so.

10. *Use such human helps as God has placed within your reach, when you meet with any thing you do not understand.* The Ethiopian, treasurer to Queen Candace, willingly received instruction from Philip; (Acts viii.) and, thus, was guided to the knowledge of the truth. In cases of difficulty, you will find it advantageous to consult a pious friend, or your minister; "The Priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts." (Mal. ii. 7.) Yet the instruction they give must be brought to the test of Scripture. (Acts xvii. 11.) It is useful, also, to refer to Commentators, or Expositors of Scripture, not with a servile dependence upon them, but as often furnishing valuable assistance*. The first account we have of human ex-

* Among the numerous, bulky and costly Expositions of the Scriptures, perhaps, the best, for general and family use, are Henry's, in 6 vols. 4to., and Scott's in 6 vols. 4to., likewise. The *Family Bible*, (or D'Oyly and Mant's,) published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, in 3 vols. 4to., is, comparatively, cheap, and unites utility with elegance; but it has not continued practical Reflections to each chapter, though it is not without excellent occasional Remarks. Orton's Exposition of the Old Testament, in 6 vols. 8vo., is an excellent family work, as is Doddridge's Family Expositor

planation of Scripture is in Nehemiah; (viii. 8.) "They gave the sense, and caused the people to understand the reading." But do not give yourself up entirely to any Commentator; if you do, you will often be misled. Judge for yourself: take your religion simply from the Scriptures, and you will have the comfort of knowing that it comes pure from God.

While upon this subject, I will mention two books, from which you would gain great assistance in reading the Bible, the first is called "The Scripture Directory; or an attempt to assist the unlearned reader to understand the general history and leading subjects of the Old and New Testament. By the Rev. Thomas Jones, Curate of Creaton." The other is called "A Scripture Help, designed to assist in reading the Bible profitably. By the Rev. Edward Bickersteth." The cost of either, or both, of these is within the attainment of most persons. But to return to our *rules*,

11. *Endeavour to ascertain the literal or first sense of any passage, before you look for any other.* Any thing may be made of the Bible, if this rule be neglected. Search, then, first, for the literal sense, as you would in the writings of any human author; in order to discover this sense, it is very useful to consider the connection of the particular passage with what goes before and follows.

of the New Testament, in 6 vols. 8vo.; but the abridgment of it, by Palmer, in 2 vols. 8vo., is more convenient for reading aloud. As books to be read *with* our common Bibles, may be mentioned Osterwald's *Arguments* on the Books and Chapters of the Old and New Testaments; with *Practical Observations*, in 2 vols., 8vo. or 3 vols. 12mo.:—and Mrs. Trimmer's *Help to the Unlearned, in the Study of the Holy Scriptures*, being an attempt to explain the Bible in a familiar Way. 1 vol. 8vo., or 2 vols. 12mo. Both these books are on the List of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

12. *Endeavour to obtain a view of the whole truth which was intended to be made known by the passage you are reading, and to discover its proper application.* While the Bible affords instruction adapted to the most simple and unlearned, it contains a depth of wisdom sufficient to reward the most diligent inquirer. Our Lord says, "Search the Scriptures." (John v. 39.) In this expression he alludes to the practice of men who *dig* in a mine; and he that would find the precious ore must dig *deep*. Thus "Seek, and you shall find." You cannot thoroughly understand your Bible, without an experimental acquaintance with the nature and influence of the truths it reveals, and a knowledge of its spirit and intention. With respect to *the experience of the truth*, much of the Bible must be unintelligible to a worldly man; he has never experienced the blessings of the peace of God, and joy in the Holy Ghost; and he can, therefore, have no right conception of them. With respect to *the spirit and intention of the word*; our Lord said to his disciples, on one occasion, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." (John vi. 63.) There is often a deep and valuable meaning conveyed under simple expressions. When any action is forbidden, or commanded, the *principle* from which the evil, or good, flows, is also comprehended. Thus, when it is said, "Thou shalt not *kill*," it literally means that we should not deprive another of his *life*; but the *full* meaning, as given by our Lord, in his Sermon on the Mount, comprehends the *words* and *thoughts*, and requires us to *love* others as ourselves. (Matt. v. 21, 22.) Again, the truth is often conveyed by figurative language, types, and parables, the spiritual meaning, or interpretation, of

which it is important to ascertain. Farther, there is a *practical improvement* to be derived from all the events recorded: "Those things happened unto them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition," (1 Cor. x. 11.)

14. In the last place, *Read the Bible observing its testimony throughout to Jesus Christ.* This is what he himself directs, "Search the Scriptures, for they testify of *me*." (John v. 39.) "All things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning *me*." (Luke xxiv. 44.) And, again, he says, "Moses wrote of *me*." (John v. 46, 47.) "To *him*," says Peter, "give all the Prophets witness; that, through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." (Acts x. 43.) Jesus Christ is the *key* that unlocks his sacred treasury, and opens to us what before was mysterious. The grand secret in the study of the Scriptures is therein to discover *Him*, who is the "the Way, the Truth, and the Life." (John xiv. 6.) "The light of the knowledge of the glory of God will shine into your heart, in the face of Jesus Christ." (2 Cor. iv. 6.) Read the Bible with a view to guide you to this knowledge of Him. "The knowledge of Jesus Christ," says an excellent writer, "is a wonderful mystery.—To understand and enter into his various offices and characters, the glories of his person and work,—his relation to us, and ours to him, and to God the Father and the Spirit through him,—this is the knowledge of Christ.—To know Jesus Christ for ourselves, is to make him our CONSOLATION,—DELIGHT,—STRENGTH,—RIGHTEOUSNESS,—COMPANION,—and END *."

* Cecil's Remains, 8vo. p. 56.

V. To sum up, then, in *three words*, what I have been discoursing about, SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES, habitually and daily, with fervent prayer for the help of the Holy Spirit. The command is express, the obligation universal, and the benefit immense. Whatever situation of life you may fill, there is something in THE SCRIPTURES that concerns *you*, something which it is infinitely important that *you* should know, or remember.

To *Parents and Heads of Families* I say, Read the Bible for your own sake, and for the sake of your children and servants. God expects that you will not only read it in private; but that you will, also, instruct your families. He requires *you*, as he did the children of Israel, in the book of Deuteronomy, (vi. 6, 7.) “to keep the words which He hath commanded, in your heart—to teach them diligently to your children,—to talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up.” How, then, can you live in the neglect of family instruction and prayer? or how can you instruct your family, if you yourselves are wilfully ignorant of this book? If you have hitherto neglected this great duty, neglect it now no longer. Remember what the Lord says concerning Abraham: “I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment, that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.” (Gen. xviii. 19.) Remember the determination of Joshua, “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” (Joshua xxiv. 15.) Follow their bright examples.

Children, you, also, should read the Bible, not merely as a task-book, but to become “wise unto salvation.” Jesus says, “Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not.” (Matt. xix. 14. Luke xviii. 16.) And, again, “They that seek me *early* shall find me.” (Prov. viii. 17.) The child Samuel early sought the Lord. Josiah was but eight years old when he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord. Jesus, at twelve years old, was found in the temple. Timothy knew the Scriptures from a child. In them you will read about Jesus Christ, how he became a child for you, and how kind he was to children. There you will learn, also, that it is your duty to love one another, and to love and obey your parents and teachers. (See Eph. vi. 1—3, Col. iii. 20. 1 John iv.) *You*, therefore, should read your Bibles.

Young men, you must read the Bible. You are about to enter the world, you will there be exposed to numberless dangers and temptations; and “where-withal shall a young man cleanse his way,” but “by taking heed thereto, according to God’s word?” (Psalm cxix. 9.) It would keep you sober-minded, and give a right direction to all that warmth, and ardour, and zeal, by which youth is distinguished. It would preserve you from numberless sins, give you peace of mind, and lead you to eternal glory. Whatever your companions say, let me intreat you—read your Bible.

You, also, *Servants*, should read your Bibles. There you will find an account of pious servants. You will see how faithfully Abraham’s servant obeyed his master: (Gen. xxiv.) how a servant-maid to Naaman, the captain of the King of Assyria’s

army, was useful to her master in bringing him to the knowledge of the true God;—you will see the punishment of a lying servant in Gehazi. (2 Kings, v.) [Some of you, perhaps, are in hard service, under severe masters. The word of God will console you in the worst service. “Thy statutes,” says David, “have been my song in the house of my pilgrimage.” (Psalm cxix. 54.)] There you will find your duty fully pointed out and explained. (Col. iii. 22—25. Eph. vi. 5—8. Titus ii. 9, 10.) It is, therefore, undeniably important, that *you* should read the Bible.

In short, all classes of men and women, in every age, in every situation, kings and subjects, ministers and people, husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants, rich and poor, righteous and wicked, prosperous and unfortunate, learned and unlearned, and all kinds of persons, may, as Archbishop Cranmer says, “learn in *this book* all things, what they ought to *do*, and what they should *not* do, as well concerning Almighty God, as also concerning themselves and all others.”

[I will conclude by addressing persons of two different characters:—

1. *Those who have hitherto read the Bible merely as a matter of form and custom, or in order to be able to say that they had done so, or to satisfy the clamours of their conscience.*

To *you* this must have often been a task. The Bible must very frequently have appeared a dull book. You may have some general knowledge of its *contents*, but you must be ignorant of its *spirit*. Attend, then, to the rules, drawn from the Bible itself, which I have endeavoured to give you. Look

for the teaching of the Holy Spirit ; and what has been your *task* will become your highest *enjoyment* ; what was *dull* and *tedious* will become full of *interest* ; what was a blunted and useless weapon against the enemies of your soul, will become “ the sword of the Spirit,” which none of them can resist. You will, then, with David rejoice at God’s Word, “ as one that findeth great spoil,” and it will be “ sweeter to you than honey, or the honey-comb.” (Psalm xix. 10.)

2. Lastly, I will say a few words to *those who never read the Bible*.

How dangerous is *your* state ! While you neglect this book, it is an evident sign that you are not a real Christian. “ My sheep,” says Christ, “ hear my voice, and they follow me.” (John x. 16.) They can say what *you* cannot, “ O how I love thy law !” (Psalm cxix. 97.) Let me apply to you the striking language of our first Homily, “ What excuse will you make, at the last day, before Christ, that delight to hear or read men’s fancies and inventions more than his most Holy Gospel ; and will find no time to do that which, chiefly, above all things, you should do, and will rather read other things than that for which you ought to leave reading all other things ?” And must I leave you content to remain in this sad condition ? Why will you sit in *darkness*, when you may have *light* ? Let me intreat you, let me prevail upon you, to begin, from this time, to read a portion of this blessed book every day. You know not what advantages you have been losing, what privileges you have been neglecting, and from what a rich feast you have been turning away ; now, then, delay no longer, embrace the

present opportunity. The Bible will illuminate your mind; its precepts will guide you through every difficulty, its doctrines will support you under every trial, its promises will console you in many sorrows, and will enable you even to "pass through the valley of the shadow of death, and fear no evil." (Psalm xxiii. 4.)]

My concluding words, then, are to every one,

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES.

SERMON V.

SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY.—GENESIS I., II.

THE BOOKS OF MOSES.—THE CREATION AND EDEN.

GENESIS i. 1.

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

THE Church beginning the Bible on this Sunday, for her first Lesson at morning and evening services, I shall, now, begin, as I have already proposed to you, a series of Sermons explaining the Bible; that is, each Sermon will treat principally of those chapters which are the proper Lessons for the day; but will notice briefly whatever may be passed over between the Sundays; which, in the course of a year, will enable me, with God's assistance, to give you a general view of the *whole* Old Testament; after which, I purpose devoting another year to the New Testament.

The first book in the Bible is called GENESIS, or *Generation*, because it treats of the *generation*, or creation, of the world and of man. But it is only one of *five books*, or *volumes*, or *rolls*, called *the five books of Moses*, or *the Pentateuch*, which, in the Greek language, signifies *the five books*. This name was, probably, first given to this portion of Scripture in the *Septuagint* version, (of which I told you in my first Introductory Discourse,) and was designed to include, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy; all of which were written by Moses, in his own hand, probably in the order in which

they now stand in our translation, though not divided by him into books, but composed in one continued work, as they remain to this day among the Jews, with no other division but that of little and great *Parasches*, a word amongst the Jews signifying *divisions*, or *sections*. It is uncertain when they were thus divided and named. They were, however, distinguished as five books in the time of *Josephus*, who speaks of them as such.

That these five books were written by Moses, we are authorized to affirm by the concurrent testimony of antiquity, and by a uniform uninterrupted tradition. He speaks of himself in many parts, as the appointed author of the contents; and it is mentioned as the work of Moses, under the title of *the Law*, by almost all the sacred writers.

These books, indeed, could not have been written after the time of Moses, for they are addressed to the Israelites as living at the same time; and they never afterwards could have been imposed as a genuine work upon his countrymen, whose religion and government were built upon them.

When the book of Genesis was first delivered, many persons then living must have been well qualified to decide on the fidelity with which he relates those events which followed the creation; they must have heard of, or disbelieved, the remarkable events in the lives of the patriarchs, the prophecies which they uttered, and the actions which they performed; for the long life of man in the earlier ages of the world, rendered *tradition* the test of truth; and, in the days of Moses, the channels of information must have been as yet uncorrupted; for, though ages had already passed, even 2432 years before the birth of Moses, yet those accounts were easily proved, which might have been conveyed by *seven persons* only

from *Adam* to *Moses*; and, that the traditions were so secure from error, we shall immediately be convinced, when we consider, that *Methuselah* was 340 years old when *Adam* died, and that *Methuselah* lived till the year of the flood, when *Noah* was 600 years old. And both of them knowing that the end of that wicked world was drawing on apace, and that *Noah* was to be another *Adam* to another world, no doubt but that they both took more than ordinary care, the one to teach, and the other to learn, all things of importance which had happened from the creation to that time. The like easy conveyance of this knowledge was providentially continued down to *Abraham*, by the long-lived *Shem*, the son of *Noah*, who survived the flood 500 years, even to the latter end of the life of *Abraham*, who, being descended from him in a right line, was, without doubt, instructed by him, as well in the history of the old world, as in all other events worthy of notice, down to his own time. *Isaac*, also, the son of *Abraham*, lived to instruct *Joseph* in the history of his time, and *Amram*, the father of *Moses*, lived at the same time with *Joseph*. Thus *Methuselah*, *Noah*, *Shem*, *Abraham*, *Isaac*, *Joseph* and *Amram*, only seven persons, would convey the accounts of the events of mankind from *Adam* to *Moses*. The Israelites, then, must have been able to judge how far the account of *Moses* was consistent with truth.

But, what is sufficient to establish, not only the authenticity of these five books, as the work of *Moses*, but, also, their claim to a divine original, as being dictated by the Spirit of God; is, that the words and laws of *Moses* are cited by the sacred writers, as the words and laws of God, and that appeal was made to them by our Saviour, and his

Apostles, on various occasions, as the genuine work of Moses ; as the production of an inspired person, or prophet, (John v. 45—47.); and, on a solemn occasion, Christ confirmed every jot and tittle of the Law, and bare testimony to the infallible accomplishment of its designs and promises. (Matt. v. 17, 18. Luke xvi. 17, 31.) It is referred to, in at least thirty three instances, by Christ and the New Testament writers.

The book of Genesis was written by Moses, as some suppose, in the land of Midian,—where he fed the flocks of his father-in-law, in the wilderness,—with design, it is said, to comfort the Israelites in their servitude, by the example of constancy in their fathers, and by a display of the oracles and promises of God ; as, particularly in that remarkable revelation to Abraham, that his seed should be a stranger in a land not theirs, and should serve them, and be afflicted 400 years, and that God should judge that nation whom they should serve, and afterwards should come out with great substance. (Gen. xv. 13, 14.) Others suppose that the book was written in the wilderness after the giving of the Law ; and others that God dictated to Moses all the contents of the book during the forty days that he was permitted to have communication with him on Mount Sinai ; and that, on his coming down, he wrote them in a book, or on a skin, or on whatever was used. It is, however, as impossible, as it is of little consequence, to determine which of these opinions is the true one ; as it is sufficient for *us* to know, that Moses was assisted by the Spirit of Truth, in the composition of this sacred work.*

* See Gray's Key to the Old Test. and Reading's Sermons on the First Lessons, Vol. i. p. 187.

As to the value of this book, an excellent writer of the present day says, that, “without this history, the world would be in comparative darkness, *not knowing whence it came, nor whither it goeth*. In the first page of this sacred book, a *child* may learn more in an hour, than all the *philosophers* in the world learned without it in a thousand years *.”

To proceed, then, with the account of the Creation :

Moses informs us, in the first verse, that, “In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth.”

This may relate, either to the beginning of this our world only, or to the beginning of all things, for that there had been a creation before that of *this world* as it now appears is certain, for there was *an earth* though it “was without form and void,” and enveloped in “darkness.” There had, also, been Angels created, some of which had warred with God in heaven, (Jude 6. see also Rev. xii. 7—9.) and had been banished from thence ; and some who had “maintained their first estate ;” and, at the creation, or formation and furnishing of this world, “sang together and shouted for joy.” (Job xxxviii. 7.)

God is a *spirit*, and has existed from *eternity*, and there was *a time* (if we may so speak of the *space* before time began) when there was nothing of the material universe which we see ; so that, whether we suppose the material universe to have existed for thousands, or millions of years, still there had been, before that, an eternity without a beginning to the Everlasting God. This is a thought which bewilders our weak and limited understandings, but how is it possible for *finite* to comprehend INFINITE ? We can but WONDER and ADORE.

* Horne on the Study of the Sacred Scriptures, 2nd Ed. Vol. iv. p. 10.

How vast how wonderful is this world in which we live! But, when, on a clear night, we lift up our eyes to the heavens, and behold the multitude of stars, and think, (as philosophers tell us,—and not without apparent reason,) that every *planet* is another *inhabited world*, and every *fixed star* a *sun* to some other system,—again are we lost in wonder! We might at first, be led to say, What are *we* then, alas! in this immensity of systems! Why nothing, were not the God who made them still more immense. Even in this world, “God taketh care for oxen,” (1 Cor. ix. 9.) “not a sparrow falls to the ground without his knowledge,” and “the very hairs of the head” of the meanest “are all numbered.” (Matt. x. 29, 30.) How much more, then, is this system, preserved and regarded, even amidst a multitude of worlds!!

Well, then, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,” he created, or formed out of nothing, all the systems of the universe; and, what it especially concerns *us* to know, that, at the period of which Moses speaks, this “earth was without form, and void,” or empty of furniture and inhabitants, “and darkness was upon the face of the deep.” It was a confused mass of earth and waters and gross vapours, what we call a *chaos*, as St. Peter expresses it, “standing out of the waters, and in the waters,” (2 Pet. iii. 5.); when “the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.—And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.”

Philosophers have here seen a difficulty, in that we are told there was *light* upon the *first* day, whereas the sun and moon and stars, or the planets in our system, were not created till the *fourth* day. But there might be other sources from whence light might come besides the sun,—from *God* himself,

who is *light*; (1 John i. 5.) and in the new Jerusalem, when the sun and moon shall again have passed away, “the glory of God will lighten it, and the Lamb will be the light thereof.” (Rev. xxi. 23.) Or it might be a light like that which afterwards conducted the Israelites in their journey through the wilderness. Some commentators have supposed, that this appearance of *light* was the separation of the element of *fire* from the other elements; that the three other elements, *earth*, *water*, and *air*, being distinctly mentioned, it is reasonable to suppose that this *light* was the particles of matter separated from the chaos, and collected into one place or body; and that, on the fourth day, it was divided, and distributed into the lights in the firmament of heaven*.” But, whatever it were, God gave the earth its motion round its *axis*, and caused day and night,—“and” so “the evening and the morning were the first day.”

On the *second day*—the account of which is contained in the 6th to the 8th verse inclusive,—God created the *firmament*, or that space above us in which is the air, the vapours and the clouds, and upwards.

On the *third day*—the account of which is contained from the 9th to the 13th verse,—a farther separation of the waters and the land was made, and the *grass* and the *herbs* and the *trees* sprang up.

On the *fourth day*—from the 14th, to the 19th verse,—God made the *sun*, the *moon* and the *stars*. That is, he either created them first at that time, or he then brought the earth and them into such a con-

* See Wogan on the Proper Lessons, Vol. ii. p. 22, and Campbell's History of the Bible there quoted.

nection as they now maintain ; and which, had there then been a rational inhabitant of the earth, would have appeared to him to have been then first created, for Moses describes these things as if to some person, or persons, beholding them*.

On the *fifth day*—from the 20th, to the 23rd verse,—God created the *fishes* of the sea and the *fowls*, or *birds*.

On the *sixth day*,—the account of which begins at the 24th verse—God made, first, the *beasts* of the earth, and the *cattle* and the *creeping things*.

At the 26th verse, a very remarkable change of expression takes place. On the first day the mode of proceeding, or the expression, was “Let there be light,” on the second, “Let there be a firmament,” on the third, “Let the waters be gathered together,” and so on ; but, on the sixth day, after the beasts and cattle, and creeping things are made, “God said, Let us make *Man* in OUR image, after OUR likeness.” This is the language of *consultation* ; not of *one* Person giving an order, or speaking his word, but of two or more persons, consulting together. It is an intimation, or revelation, of the doctrine of THE TRINITY, of THREE PERSONS united in ONE GODHEAD ; a doctrine of the most awful importance to every soul of man. But, as this chapter occurs again, as the first Lesson, at morning service, on Trinity Sunday, I shall defer the full consideration

* Whoever wishes to enlarge his mind by considering something, in a popular way, of the astonishing wonders of the heavens, may read the late Professor Vince’s Confutation of Atheism, or Dr. Chalmers’s Sermons on Astronomy, or—in a still smaller work, and more popular manner—Baker’s Poem of *The Universe*, of which an edition, with explanatory Notes, was published in 1808, by A. Crocker.

of the subject till that day ; and will merely mention, for your satisfaction, now, that St. John, in the 1st chapter of his Gospel, speaking of JESUS CHRIST, THE WORD OF GOD, says, "All things were made by him ; and without him was not any thing made that was made," (ver. 3.) In respect to THE HOLY GHOST, we are told here, in the 2nd verse of the 1st chapter of Genesis, that "THE SPIRIT OF GOD moved upon the face of the waters ;" and in the 4th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, when Peter and John had healed, at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple, the man who had been a cripple from his mother's womb, and the people glorified God for it, and were rebuked by the chief-priests and elders, the multitude "lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, LORD, thou art God, which hast made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is ; who, by the mouth of thy servant David, hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things ?" (ver. 24, 25.) But in the 1st chapter of the Acts, and the 16th verse, we are told, likewise, that he who "spake by the mouth of David" was "THE HOLY GHOST." THE HOLY GHOST, therefore, likewise, was one of the Persons who "made heaven and earth, and the sea."

The next particular which seems to demand our attention is, that "God said, Let us make Man in *our image*, after *our likeness* ;" that is, after our likeness, not in respect to his body, but his rational soul, or spirit ; and it is, afterwards, said, in the IInd chapter and the 7th verse, that "the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils *the breath of life* ; and Man became *a living soul* : " and to Man God gave dominion over the

earth and its furniture and every living thing contained in it.

Though the account of the particular manner in which Eve was created is not given till afterwards, the IInd chapter, from the 21st to the 25th verse, yet, it should seem, from the 27th verse of the Ist chapter, and the 1st and 2nd verses of the Vth chapter, that both Man and Woman were created in the same day ; and that the Lord God had planted the Garden in Eden and placed Adam in it, before he formed the “help meet for him.” We may observe, likewise, that marriage “was instituted of God, in the time of man’s innocency,” in Paradise; and that St. Paul, in the IInd chapter of his 1st Epistle to Timothy, the 13th verse, mentions the circumstance of Adam being the “first formed,” as a reason for the meek, willing, and affectionate subjection of the wife to the husband.

“Thus,” says Moses, at the beginning of the IInd chapter “the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And, on the seventh day, God ended his work which he had made; and he *rested* on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God *blessed* the seventh day, and *sanctified* it; because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.”

Some Philosophers, in these days, in their researches into the bowels of the earth, and what they conceive to have been once the bowels of the earth, though now heaved up above its surface, have observed some appearances, which seem to them inconsistent with the idea of the creation of the world in *six* such portions of *time* as we call *days*; and they, therefore, suppose that the word *days*, here used by Moses, must mean *figurative*

days, that is very long portions of time, even hundreds, or thousands, of years, in which these appearances in the strata of the earth could be brought about*. But, it seems to me, that the appointment by God to man of six days of labour, measured by the revolution of the sun, or, more strictly speaking, by the revolution of the earth, with a seventh day of rest, in remembrance of God's creating the world in six days, with a *rest*, or ceasing to work, on the seventh, necessarily fixes it to six such days as ours. God could as easily have said "Let there be earth and every thing in it," and for every thing to have arisen perfect in an instant, as he said to the light and every thing else in succession, and they appeared; but he was pleased—and for *wise* purposes, no doubt,—to have them rise in succession, and in certain portions of time, and *that*, in all probability, was, that Man, in his six days of work, (easy and pleasant, while in Paradise,) with his seventh of *rest* and more particular *devotion*, should "remember his *Creator*," and *how* and *by whom* "the heavens and the earth were finished." [When any appearance in the *works* of God seems to be contrary to his *word*, it is our part, surely to hold the mind in suspense and to confess the difficulty and our own ignorance, rather than to make the obvious word of God bend to a doubtful appearance! What was the state of this earth before the time when Moses begins to speak of it, we cannot know. What he does say of it, we are bound to receive.]

* See Parkinson's Organic Remains of a former world, vol. iii. p. 449. Mantell's Geology of Sussex, Introduction, and Faber on the Genius and Object of the Patriarchal, the Levitical, and the Christian Dispensations.

And let us not pass over *the Sabbath*, without observing what a blessing it is to mankind. Even in Paradise, in a state of innocence, it must have been a blessing to have every seventh day observed as a rest from work, however easy and pleasant, and to give it up for the service of God; for, probably, as God condescended to have personal intercourse with man, in that state, as we find in the III^d ch. and the 8th verse, that he had, this intercourse was more continued and free upon the Sabbath. But, to man in a fallen state, how great is the blessing! In the Sabbath, he, not only commemorates the great and good act of God in creation, in giving him *life* and the means which tend to support and to make it delightful; but he commemorates, likewise, his *redemption* by Jesus Christ, to whom he is indebted, not only for his animal life, as “by him were all things made,” but his creation to a *new life*, from sin and death, to righteousness and true holiness, by his resurrection from the dead. Considered merely in a worldly view, how great an advantage is the Sabbath to all; but, most especially, to the *poor*, that every seventh day gives rest to them from that *labour* which causes the sweat to fall from their brows upon the earth. But, when we consider it in a spiritual light, as affording leisure to the soul, to hold a longer and more close communion with God in social worship, the advantage is beyond all expression. What is the state of those countries, where no Sabbath is observed, or where it is observed imperfectly? What is the state of those persons in this country who do not observe the Sabbath, that is who do not observe it as a day devoted to God? Look around in *our own parish*,

what are those who attend no place of worship, and no more think upon God than the beasts that have no knowledge of him? I know enough to answer the question; and most of you know more than I do.

And, be it remarked, that the *first whole day* of Adam's existence was this *Sabbath* of rest and devotion. On the sixth day, when all was completed, God surveyed "every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was VERY GOOD." And, then, may we suppose, that the "morning stars," "the sons of God," the Holy Angels, beholding too this fresh instance of God's admirable skill and power, his infinite wisdom and infinite goodness, "sung together and shouted for joy," they burst forth in praises to him "who created all things, and for whose pleasure they are, and were created." (Rev. iv. 2.)

And let *us*, while the opportunity is before us, contemplate a world of innocence and bliss, in which there is *no sin* and *no sorrow*. But, to creatures living in a world of sin and sorrow, it will aid our imaginations to say first what was *not* the state of *Man* in *Paradise*, in order that we may conceive more fully what it *was*. It was *not*, then, like this world, under a curse as to its soil, bringing forth the thorn, and the brier, and the thistle without care, and producing useful grain and fruits only by care and labour,—it was *not* subject to blights and mildews, to frosts, to storms, and tempests,—it was *not* subject to wasting insects, or ravaging beasts,—nor were its inhabitants full of violence and wrong, tearing and harassing each other,—there was neither war, nor robbery, nor wrong,—no coveting, no envy, no striving with each other in pride for state and shew :—but all nature was in its prime and its per-

fection, all was made according to the wisdom and goodness of God; but Eden was the chief, the glory of all; all herbs, all flowers, all fruits, all in perfection, grateful to the sight, the smell, the taste, all for the use and delight of its inhabitants—save ONE ONLY TREE, THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL, reserved by the Maker of all as A TEST of the obedience of his so-richly-endowed creature, Man; with all the other creatures placed under subjection to him, for his admiration, his instruction, his delight, his use. And what was Man? He was made in the image of his Creator, in health and strength, endowed with reason to comprehend much, very much of what he saw, and with speech to give utterance to his thoughts, and to receive communication from others,—no jarring or irregular passions to torment him, dominion without fear or vexation, marriage without discord, and social converse with Angels and with God.

Oh! Almighty, All-wise, All-benevolent God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, shed thy sanctifying influence abroad in all *our* hearts, that *we*, through the merits and mediation of the blessed Son, may attain—Oh! stupendous work of INFINITE GOODNESS,—that even BETTER PARADISE which thou hast prepared for them who love thee, and walk in thy ways.

SERMON VI.

SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY.—GENESIS III.

THE FALL OF MAN.

GENESIS iii. 15.

And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

IN the chapters from the Old Testament for our Lessons on Sunday last, and in my Discourse upon them, we were led to contemplate the creation of all things, and especially of man, who was appointed lord of all, and his situation in the garden of Eden; and I was willing, while the opportunity offered, to indulge in the contemplation of a world unstained with sin, sickness and sorrow; and, so, kept out of sight, as much as might be, the prohibition of God to eating the fruit of one particular tree in the garden, and the shameful transgression of this command by the first Parents of mankind. The chapters for this day, however, bring the subject fully and unavoidably to our consideration, and we must meet it with that awe, and shame, and sorrow, which it so necessarily demands.

In the II^d chapter, the 15th, 16th, and 17th verses, we were told, that “the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it, and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man,

saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat ; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt *not* eat of it : for, in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die."

It is no where said, either in the beginning of Genesis, or in any other part of Scripture, how long our first parents maintained their state of innocence. Some commentators have held that it was for some time ; and others have contended, that it was the very next day after their creation that they transgressed. The Poet Milton, who was no mean commentator upon Scripture, makes it some days at the least, if not a much longer time. I am aware of but one circumstance which seems to throw *any* light upon the matter, and that occurs towards the end of the third chapter of Genesis, and which I will notice, in its course, as we come to it.

The IIIrd chapter begins, "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden ?" It is not here expressly mentioned that it was the *Devil* who entered into the *serpent*, or in the form of a serpent, that tempted Eve ; but the knowledge and recollection of *who* was the *tempter* of our first parents was so general and so strong among the Jews, that to mention *one* was to mention *both* ; and this idea is what prevails throughout Scripture. In the XIIth chapter of the Book of Revelation, the 9th verse, (see also xx. 2.) he is called "the great dragon,"—"that old serpent, called the devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world." Our Lord, (1 Cor. xv. 45, 47,) is called the second Adam, because, "as, in" the first Adam, "all die, even so, in Christ, shall

all be made alive;" (1 Cor. xv. 22.) and, when he was tempted, we are expressly told it was by the devil. (Matt. iv. 1.) And our Lord says of the devil, (John viii. 44.) "he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him;"—"he is a liar and the father of it." That is he was a *liar*, the first liar, the father of lies, when he told our first parents that they should not die, if they eat of the forbidden fruit, but should become like God; and he was a *murderer* from the beginning, when, in tempting our first parents to disobey God, and eat the forbidden fruit, he brought *death* upon them; and, in them, upon all the myriads of myriads of their posterity.

The history proceeds: "And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die." Now mark the impudence and wickedness of the Devil, "And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know, that, in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened; and ye shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil." Is not this exactly the way in which the Devil tempts at this day, either by means of those whom he has already seduced to his own wicked ways, or by suggestions to our own minds? When a man is tempted to a sin, when appetite, or want, or any other motive, inclines him to it,—though the word of God is very clear against it,—yet he says to himself, or some *tempter* says to him, There can be no harm in this, God can never have forbidden this,—he cannot mean, when he says *so and so*, that we

should not do this. Or, if he should know, and feel it to be wrong, the tempter says, Ye shall not be found out, ye shall not be punished, “Ye shall not surely die,” Ye shall gain some desirable end, ye shall gain pleasure, or become rich, or become great; just as, “when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and gave, also, unto her husband with her, and he did eat.” And, now, mark the consequence, “And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked: and they sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God, amongst the trees of the garden.” A case which occurred in this neighbourhood, within a very few years, will strongly illustrate this deceitfulness of Satan. A man, in a neighbouring town*, had married, but he left his wife, and went to live at a distance. He there met with another woman whom he wished to marry; but his having a wife already was a hindrance, so he returned to her, enticed her away, and murdered her on the journey, thinking there would, now, be no impediment to his second marriage, and that he should live with his new wife *happy* and *long*. But what was the consequence? The same day he is apprehended, he is taken to prison in all the horrors

* Thomas Weems, of Godmanchester, who murdered his wife on the road between Arrington and Royston, on Friday the 7th of May, 1819. He was executed at Cambridge, Friday, August 6th.

of sin committed and discovered and about to be punished, he is tried, found guilty, and executed: And yet the tempter had said, This is the most desirable of all things, “Ye shall not surely die.”

Let us take a less strong case, a person is tempted to commit a robbery, he thinks he shall enrich himself, and procure much pleasure. Satan says, Ye shall not be discovered, Ye shall not be punished. He commits it. His eyes are opened, he now knows, he *feels*, the difference between good and evil, he lives in fear of detection, he is discovered, he brings himself, his family and friends into trouble, he is imprisoned, he is punished, he is, perhaps, banished from his country and friends for ever,—perhaps even his *life* is forfeited. And yet Satan had said, “Ye shall not surely die.”

But, if some have escaped detection and punishment for a time, or even to the end of their lives, still how many have confessed that they never knew a happy hour after committing sin, and that the stings of a guilty conscience were worse than even death. I appeal to the consciences of all here present. Who is there who has not committed sin of some kind? Recollect how you were led into it. Say what real advantage you ever derived from it? “What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?” (Rom. vi. 21,) Say, rather, what pain, what anguish, what remorse it has occasioned to your souls.

But “Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God;” that is, they *attempted* to hide themselves, for to *hide* ourselves from God is impossible:

God’s all-seeing eye surveys
Our secret thoughts, and all our ways.

And, when men sin now, they attempt to hide themselves from the presence of God ; if they have been accustomed to attend public worship, it is forsaken ; if they have been used to private prayer, it is given up ; and depend upon this for a *certainty*, that, if you have known any one constant at public worship, and that he gives it up, *sin* is at the bottom, and that there is some great sin unrepented, or he is still living in habits of wilful sin.

“ And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou ? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked ; and I hid myself. And the Lord God said, Who told thee that thou wast naked ? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat ? And the man said, The woman, whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done ? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.”

Thus did the first transgressors, instead of confessing and lamenting their sin, and asking forgiveness, attempt to palliate it, and throw the blame upon others. “ The man ” laid the blame upon “ the woman : ” but, not only that, he attempts to throw the blame upon God also, “ the woman, whom *Thou* gavest to be with me.” But she was given to be his *help* and comfort, not his *tempter* ; and, if she transgressed the command of their Creator, with whom they were in daily habits of conversing, a reference should have been made to Him, to know what should be done. By some persons the transgression of Adam, in listening to the temptation of Eve, and (as Milton represents it)

resolving, out of love to her, to share the same fate, has been considered as “an amiable weakness ;” but, was it not—what *idolatry* has always been—a setting up of the *creature* in preference to the CREATOR? He who had formed the woman out of Adam’s side, and had given them this *test* of their obedience to Him, when the woman had proved unworthy, could have provided another, had it seemed for the man’s good. What! merely an *amiable weakness* to transgress the only law ordained by Him, who had given them ALL *but the fruit of that one tree!* and to bring death with all its dreadful consequences upon himself and all his posterity. *We*, indeed, might have fallen under the same circumstances; therefore, let us not boast, nor uncharitably condemn; but let us be careful, on the other hand, that we do not palliate the first and greatest sin.

“And the Lord said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field: upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:” What an awful warning is this to *tempters*, to those who lead others into sin, either by their advice, by their persuasion, their example, or by their ridiculing what is good. Surely, if, as Daniel says, (xii. 3.) “They that turn many to righteousness,” shall “shine as the stars,” as the angels, those bright and morning stars, “for ever and ever;” they who turn *many*, or even *one*, to *sin*, shall be punished, with the devil and his angels, for ever and ever!

But the sentence against the serpent goes on, “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” Here is

mercy breaking forth even amidst punishment, here is *hope* beaming even amidst despair! not to the tempter, however; his *head*, his vital part, his power of doing mischief, is to be effectually *bruised*. Here is the first promise of a SAVIOUR, not very explicit, indeed; but, like the first dawning, “that shineth more and more unto the perfect day,” (Prov. iv. 18.) it becomes more and more full and plain, till the Saviour is indeed manifested: we shall follow it through the Scripture, in the *Prophecies* and in the *Types*, till they are fulfilled in Christ. “He that committeth sin,” saith St. John, in his 1st Epistle (iii. 8.) “is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.” And St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, (xvi. 19, 20.) in allusion to this transaction, says, “I would have you *wise* unto that which is *good*, and *simple* concerning *evil*. And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.” And, again, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, (ii. 14, 15.) speaking of the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh, and his sufferings in it, he says, “Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he, also, himself, likewise, took part of the same, that, through death, he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them, who, through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage.”

God proceeds to pronounce the curse upon the woman, who was first in the transgression. When man and woman were first formed, “God *blessed* them; and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion.” (Gen. i. 28.) But now, “Unto

the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow *and* thy conception," or rather it should be rendered "*in* thy conception," in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; "and thy desire shall be to," or shall be subject to, "thy husband, and he shall rule over thee," that is, shall have a *fuller* power over thee than before, because thou hast shewn how much thou standest in need of control. For St. Paul, in his 1st Epistle to Timothy, (ii. 13, 14.) gives it as a first reason why the woman should be in "subjection" to the man, that, "Adam was first formed, then Eve," and, as a second, or stronger, reason, that "Adam was not deceived, but the woman, being deceived, was in the transgression." This curse, however, was not without alleviation; for, as we have just heard, in his curse upon the serpent, God said that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head; and St. Paul, in the verse following those just quoted, says, "Notwithstanding, she shall be saved in" or by, "child-bearing, if they continue in faith and charity, and holiness with sobriety." Thus every child that is born into the world should serve as a remembrancer of the first transgression, and of salvation through Him who was peculiarly "the seed of the *woman*," being born of a *virgin-mother* without any human father. The evil-spirit "brought *death* into the world with all its woe," the Holy Spirit is "the Lord, and giver of *life*," (Rom. viii. 10, 11. 2 Cor. iii. 6. 2 Pet. iii. 18.); gave life to Him, (Luke i. 35.) who is "the way, and the truth, and the *LIFE*." (John xiv. 6.)

"And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it; cursed is the ground for

thy sake ; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life ; thorns, also, and thistles shall it bring forth to thee ; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground : for out of it wast thou taken : for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

We were told in the account of the creation, that, when Adam was placed in the garden of Eden, he was "to dress it and to keep it," by which we may suppose that there was something for him to do, in the way of training and pruning, which might serve for employment, for exercise and amusement, not only of the body, but of the *mind* likewise ; these works would all tend to lead his thoughts to the Great Author of them all*. In the new Jerusalem, exhibited to St. John, in the Revelation, the tree of life "yielded her fruit every month." (xxii. 2.) All was beauty, all was abundance, and the *work* (if such a term may be used) we may be certain was ease and pleasure. But, now that man has sinned, that flesh and blood has rebelled against its Creator, the case is altered, and labour and sorrow are introduced, though not without a gracious mixture of pleasure and improvement to those who have their appetites and faculties in subjection to avail themselves of them. Thus the *daily labour* of man, and the thorns and the briars, and the thistles, which are the nuisances of his agriculture, ought to remind him daily of the fall which man has suffered, and how that Paradise is to be regained through "Christ," who "hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us ;" (Gal. iii. 13.) in order to bring

* See Bishop Horne's Sermon on the Garden of Eden.

us to that new Jerusalem where “there shall be no more curse.” (Rev. xxii. 3.)

“And Adam called his wife’s name *Eve*; because she was the mother of all living. Unto Adam, also, and to his wife, did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them.”

Some commentators have supposed, that, in a state of innocence, our first parents were encompassed, or clothed, with a glory or brightness similar to that which encompassed our Lord at his transfiguration,—a robe of righteousness;—and, that, when they had transgressed, this was withdrawn and left them naked. Milton has supposed that irregular desires were the consequence of the transgression. But, however this may have been, there was now a consciousness and shame, which there was *not* before, and they devised a flimsy covering for their bodies, as they did excuses for the sin of their souls. God, however, provided, or probably instructed them how to provide, a more suitable and desirable covering, and a protection from the inclemencies of the seasons which were to succeed. Dress, then, instead of being made the means of vanity and pride, should serve to humble us for our fallen condition and corrupt nature.

Why should our garments, made to hide
Our parents’ shame, provoke our pride?
The art of dress did ne’er begin
Till Eve our mother learnt to sin.

When first she put the covering on,
Her robe of innocence was gone;
And yet her children vainly boast
In the sad marks of glory lost.

It is the prevailing opinion, that the beasts from which these *skins* were taken, had been slain in

sacrifice ; and that sacrifice was at this time instituted, at the command of God*, as a *type*, or representation before hand, of that GREAT SACRIFICE which was afterwards to be offered for the sin of the whole world. We find Abel, in the IVth chapter, “brought of the firstlings of his flock,”—“an offering unto the Lord”—“and the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering,” which he would not have done, had it not been a service appointed by, and acceptable to, himself. This *lamb* was a type of *Christ*, called expressly (Rev. xiii. 8.) “the lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”

I said, at the beginning of this discourse, that I was aware of but one circumstance which seemed to throw any light upon the *time* which our first parents continued in Paradise, and which occurred towards the end of this chapter ; and *this* is the passage. Now, if God, at the first, created but one pair of each kind of animal, as is generally supposed, and now there were animals sufficient to spare some to be killed for sacrifice, without extirpating the breed, then time sufficient must have passed for these animals to have multiplied. This will allow some *weeks*, and even *months* ; and, if we were to go on, and suppose any likeness between this and the *lamb* afterwards slain in the *passover* (and which was,

* Mr. Benson, in his Hulsean Lectures for 1822, is of a contrary opinion, and thinks that the sacrifice of Abel was his own spontaneous act ; but, considering it in connection with the clothing of Adam and Eve in skins, its being offered “in faith,” (Heb. xi. 4.) with the sacrifice of Isaac, the paschal lamb, the lamb daily sacrificed under the law, and Christ being called “the lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world,” (John i. 29.) and “the lamb slain from the foundation of the world,” (Rev. xiii. 8.), I cannot but think, that it must have been appointed by God as a type of Christ.

likewise, confessedly a type of Christ, (1 Cor. v. 7.) *that* was to be “a male of the first year,” (Exod. xii. 5.) that is about *a year* old, which would extend the time still farther *.

* When the author made this remark, he was not aware that any one had made it before. He, now, finds, from Scott's Commentary on the place, that it is not original. There is a difficulty, however, in the way of supposing any time to have elapsed between the creation, and the temptation and fall, namely—and especially after the blessing pronounced upon our first Parents, Gen. i. 28.—How came they not to have any offspring, the fruit of their innocence? for it seems, from Gen. iv. 1., that Cain was not begotten till after the fall. There is ground, surely, to conclude, that Adam and Eve at least passed the Sabbath, one whole day after their creation, in innocence in Eden.

Jones of Nayland has given a conjecture, in his “Enquiry into the Circumstances and Moral Intention of the Temptation of Jesus Christ in the Wilderness,” which is deserving of consideration. (See his Works in 12 Vols., Vol. III. p. 172.) Speaking of the period of *forty days* during which Christ was tempted in the wilderness, he says, “After revolving it long in my thoughts, I would propose the following conjecture to those who are skilful in the Scripture; namely, that the first man spent forty days in Paradise, and that in this period he was tempted, fell into sin by eating the forbidden fruit, and forfeited the Tree of Life, with the inheritance of immortality. If this be supposed, the period of forty days will occur naturally in other transactions, and particularly in this of our Saviour's temptation and fall of the first Adam. The *curse* brought upon the world by the flood, and occasioned by the sin committed in Paradise, (See Gen. v. 29.) was forty days in the execution, for so long the rains were descending, and the great deep emptying itself upon the earth's surface; that the sin and its history might be recognised in its punishment †. When the Israelites searched the land of Canaan, that second paradise, which was to be the reward of their probation

† It may be remarked, that the space during which “the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing,” (1 Peter iii. 20.), was “an hundred and twenty years,” (Gen. vi. 3.) that is *thrice forty* years. If our Chronology of the Bible be accurate, the year of the flood was 1656, that is forty one forties, and sixteen years over. This is not, in so long a space, greatly above *forty forties*, and our Chronology may not be accurate.—J. P.

“ And the Lord God said,” that is *ironically*, “ Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil :” but to know it how *differently* ! God, in his righteousness, knows the difference between good and evil ; man, who had been good, in his *sin* knows *evil* by its bitter consequences. “ And, now,” continues the Lord God, “ lest he put forth his hand, and take, also, of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever ; therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man ; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubims, and a flaming sword, which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.”

in the wilderness, they had a foretaste of it for forty days ; (Numb. xiv. 33, 34.) and the people who murmured at the evil report of the faithless spies, were condemned to wander forty years in the wilderness, a year for a day : so that this penance symbolizes again with the curse which was consequent to the loss of Paradise.

“ Under the ministry of the Prophet Jonah, the space of forty days was allowed to the Ninevites, as an interval in which they might have an opportunity of averting the divine judgment by repentance and fasting. Moses spent forty days and forty nights upon the mount, when he received the tables of the law, from the hand of God : and the same act was repeated, on occasion of the tables which were broken. During his continuance in the mount, he *did neither eat bread nor drink water* ; and his fast was observed in a wilderness. *Elijah* also, when he fled out of Judea, crossed the river Jordan, and fasted forty days and forty nights in that wilderness wherein mount *Horeb* stood ; where *Moses* had twice fasted for forty days, and where the Israelites were led about in a state of penance for forty years.

“ The general agreement on so many occasions concerning the period of forty days might probably be derived from the original I have supposed ; but however that may be, it could not happen by chance ; and therefore it might well be said, when Christ had fasted forty days, that the days were *fulfilled* ; this period, according to the abundant testimony of the Scripture, being more suitable to the occasion than any other.”

It hath been thought by some a hard and unjust matter, that Adam and his wife should suffer so severe a punishment for, what they consider, so trifling an offence; and, what is worse, that all their posterity, who were not then in being, should suffer on their account. An excellent writer hath stated the case in so plain and convincing a way, that I cannot do better than cite his own words:

“ If the will of the Maker were to be enacted into a law, for the purpose of trying the obedience of man, we cannot conceive a more easy and simple method than the prohibiting the use of one single tree amidst the thousands which were laden with the choicest fruit. If God had prohibited all except one, it would have been highly reasonable that He should be obeyed, seeing that they were all the works of His hands, and He was at liberty to give or withhold, as it seemed to Him good. But when He gave the free enjoyment of all, and denied him only one, certainly nothing could be more reasonable than that His will should be honoured by a cheerful compliance.

“ Nor was it less reasonable that the prohibition should be enforced with so severe a penalty, for the object of the penalty was, to keep Adam from transgression, and to shut him up under a necessity of continuing holy and happy: and therefore the more awful the sanctions were, the more likely they were to answer the desired end; and the more gracious was God in annexing them to his prohibition.”

As to us his posterity,

“ It is but a small thing to say concerning the covenant, that it was just: we must go much farther; and affirm, that it was in the highest degree favour-

able and advantageous to all who were interested in it. Consider the state in which Adam was, when subjected to the temptation: and compare with it the state in which *we* should meet temptation, supposing every one of us to be called forth to the trial as soon as we entered into the world: *he* was perfect, *we* are imperfect: *he* was in full possession of all his faculties; *we* should begin our conflict while all the powers of our souls were in a state of infantine weakness: *he* was exposed to only one temptation, and that apparently easy to be withstood, on account of his having no evil disposition to close with it; *we* should be assaulted with ten thousand temptations, with every one of which we have a proneness to comply: *he* conflicted with his enemy who was yet unskilled in the work of beguiling souls: *we* should engage him after his skill has been augmented by the “experience of” nearly “six thousand years: *he* was fortified by the consideration that not his own happiness only, but that also of all his posterity, depended on him; whereas *we* should have no other motive to steadfastness than a regard to our own personal welfare. Let any one compare these states, and then say, whether Adam or we were more likely to fall: and if it appear that his situation was far more conducive to stability than ours, then must it be considered as a great advantage to us to have had such a person for our covenant head. If it be said, that eventually we are sufferers by it; we may well be satisfied with it; since if he, with all his advantages, was overcome, there is no hope at all that we, under all our disadvantages, should have maintained our integrity. Nor can we doubt, but that if all the human race had been summoned before God at once

to hear the proposal of having Adam for their covenant-head, every one of them would have accepted it, as a signal token of the divine goodness *."

And, if such be the goodness of God displayed in his covenant with the first Adam, what shall we say, after the transgression of that, to his infinitely greater goodness displayed in his covenant with the second Adam, through whose merits and mediation, and through a belief in which, and walking in his ways, we have a "right to the tree of life," which again flourishes by the side of the "river of water of life," which bears "twelve manner of fruits," and yields "her fruit every month," and whose "leaves" are "for the healing of the nations?" (Rev. xxii. 14, and 1, 2.)

* Simeon's *Horæ Homileticæ*, Vol. I. p. 32.

SERMON VII.

QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY.—GENESIS IV—IX.

THE WORLD OF THE UNGODLY AND THE DESTRUCTION OF IT
BY THE FLOOD.

GENESIS ix. 12—16.

And God said, this is the TOKEN of the COVENANT which I make between ME and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations : I do set my Bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a Token of a Covenant between me and the Earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the Bow shall be seen in the Cloud : and I will remember my Covenant, which is between ME and you, and every living creature of all flesh ; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the Bow shall be in the cloud, and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting Covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth.

IN our meditations on Sunday last, we considered the account of the Fall of our first Parents, as related in the III^d chapter of Genesis, a subject of so much importance as not to allow us space to consider the awful event related in the IVth chapter, the murder of Abel by his brother Cain, or the resolution of God to destroy the world, on account of its wickedness, as related in the Vth chapter, which was the first Lesson at the Evening Service. These and the coming of the flood, and God's covenant with Noah afterwards, demand our attention this day.

“By one man,” says the Apostle, “sin entered into the world, and death by sin.” (Rom. v. 12.) And this shewed itself in the first-born of Adam and Eve, for Cain first envied his brother Abel, because he was righteous (Matt. xxiii. 25.) before God, and God had respect unto him and his sacrifice of the firstlings of his flock, that is of a lamb offered in faith of that “seed of the woman,” who was to “bruise the serpent’s head,” “the lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” And Cain’s *envy* grew into *hatred*, and *hatred* proceeded, in its natural course, to *murder*: for, as St. John saith, “whosoever *hateth* his brother is a *murderer*,” (1 John iii. 15.); that is, he would murder him, if he were not restrained by the law, or some other power, and often does murder him, notwithstanding such restraints. In consequence of this, Cain was driven from “the presence of the Lord,” to be a fugitive and “a vagabond upon the earth;” but, after some time, “he builded a city” and dwelt there.

And Adam and Eve had a son, instead of Abel, whom they called Seth; and he had a son, in the course of time, whom he called Enos: and it is said, in the 26th verse of the IVth chapter, “then began men to call upon the name of the Lord,” or, as it is in the margin of our great Bibles, “to call themselves by the name of the Lord.” If the first be considered as the right translation, the meaning, probably, is, that men being multiplied into many families, they, at least the piously disposed, began to meet together in some appointed place for public worship, and called upon the name of the Lord, or publicly worshipped God. If the second be the right translation, then the meaning will be, that pious persons, the children of Adam and of Seth, seeing the wickedness

of Cain and his descendants, openly avowed their reverence for God, and called themselves by his name; that is, they were *the Church of God*, which has always existed, however few in number, amidst the greatest depravity of mankind.

The Vth chapter presents us with “the book of the generations of Adam,” or, as it is called, his *Genealogy*, to Noah, which, though little more than a list of *names*, is, still, very important, as it preserves the knowledge of the descent of Jesus Christ from Adam to Noah, and, so, to Abraham, to David, and to the blessed virgin his mother.

We must not, however, pass over what is said respecting *Enoch*, in the passage beginning at the 22nd verse, where it is said, that “Enoch walked with God,” which is repeated in the 24th verse, and it is added, “and he was not : for God took him.”

By the words “walked with God” is meant the same thing as was said of Zacharias and Elizabeth, “they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.” (Luke i. 6.) But it still farther implies “a gracious and endearing *familiarity* between the Creator and his creature.”—“Persons that are unknown we pass by, superiors we follow respectfully at a distance, and walk only with acquaintances and friends *.” Thus, Abraham was called the friend of God. (James ii. 23.) “Acquaint thyself with him,” that is, with God, says Job, “and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee.” (Job xxii. 21.) And Jesus expressly says to his disciples, “I have called you *friends*.” (John xv. 15.) And he says,

* Bishop Horne’s Considerations on the Life and Translation of Enoch, p. 43.

further, "If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and *make our abode* with him." (John xiv. 23) St. Paul says expressly, (Heb. xi. 5.) "that he pleased God." And that it was "by faith that Enoch was translated, that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him." That is, God took him to heaven while he was living, in some such manner as he, afterwards, took Elijah, and our blessed Lord; and, as St. Paul says, those "which are alive," at the general resurrection, "shall be caught up"—"in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and, so, shall be ever with the Lord." (1 Thess. iv. 17.) And such, probably, would have been the case with Adam and the whole human race, had not man, by *sin*, brought *death* into the world. It is said, moreover, of Enoch, by St. Jude, that he prophesied of the coming of Christ to judgment. (verse 14, 15.)

The VIth chapter opens with saying, "And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were *fair*; and they took them wives of all which they chose."

The account, in the Bible, of the early times, is so very short, and relates to so few persons, having been written, as I have before stated, merely to give an account of the descent from Adam to Christ, that we are not, perhaps, sufficiently accustomed to consider, what must have been the state of the world, at that time, and how much men had *multiplied*. We read of Adam and Eve, and next of Cain and Abel, and of Cain's murdering Abel; and many persons

think that there were no others in the world. But we read, (iv. 17.) that Cain had *a wife*; and Cain, also, was fearful, that, when he was “a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth,”—“every one that met with him would be for killing him,” (verse 14,) so that there were *others* of whom he was afraid. At the time of the murder of Abel, Adam was 130 years old, and, probably, had a numerous progeny of sons and daughters, and grandchildren. One of the Commentators* sets them at about *four thousand*, and others suppose them to have been many more. The flood began in the year 1656. To how many *millions*, then, must we suppose them to have increased by that time. “Of the ten generations before the flood,” says Reading, “half of them were fully sufficient to store all the world with inhabitants.”—“So that we may say, men were multiplied upon the earth 800 years at least before the general destruction,” and this was within the life of Adam.

It may assist us to form some idea of the population of the earth at the time of the flood, if we take as many years after the flood, as there were years from the creation to the flood, and see what was the state of the world at that time. This would bring us to about the year of the world 3312, or 13, in the reign of Manasseh, king of Judah; which was long after what we read respecting the kingdom of Egypt, and the sojourning of the children of Israel there, their journey through the wilderness and the nations bordering upon it, their settlement in the land of Canaan, their wars with some nations, and their commerce with others; besides the Philistines,

* Whiston.

there were Tyre and Sidon, Damascus, Nineveh and Babylon, Arabia, Saba, and India, and "the multitude of the isles." And, probably, in the longer lives of the patriarchs before the flood, and a more vigorous race, population increased faster before the flood than after*.

The arts and sciences, too, had made some progress. For Cain, not only builded a city, but Tubalcain "was an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron;" Jubal invented musical instruments, and the name of *Naamah*, their sister, signified *beauty*, and the Jews say that she invented the mode of manufacturing wool. The name of *Adah*, the mother of Jubal, signified *exactness of dress*. It was in this state of luxury, refinement, and sin, that "the sons of God," the descendants of Seth, "saw the daughters of men," the descendants of Cain, "that they were fair;" and, allured by their beauty, and riches, and luxury, "took them wives of all which they chose." The consequence of such marriages soon appeared. "There were," also, "giants in the earth, in those

* Whiston computes them at about one hundred thousand millions, that is twenty times as many as our present earth has, in all probability, now upon it, or can well be supposed capable of maintaining in its present constitution.

But Cockburn in his treatise upon the Deluge, thinks Whiston's estimates much too high; yet, with making great deductions and allowances, he thinks that the total number of mankind alive upon earth, at the time of the deluge, was about thirteen billions, or millions of millions, seven hundred and forty three thousand eight hundred and ninety-five millions, three hundred and forty-seven thousand, and two hundred; a number vastly exceeding that of the present inhabitants of the whole earth. See the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, article *Antediluvians*. Under the article *Population*, however, the writer gives 1000 millions as the greatest estimated population of the world, at this time.

days," "mighty men," "men of renown," probably in war and conquest; for we read, farther, that "the earth was filled with violence."—"And God saw, that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." What a soul-rending sight must it have been to our first Parents, the world fully peopled, and full of violence and sin—from *their transgression*!

The ungodly were not, however, suffered to go on without some checks and warnings. The Holy Spirit strove with them by inward workings, and by means of faithful preachers, for both Enoch and Noah were preachers of righteousness. "And the Lord said, my Spirit shall not always strive with man."—"I will destroy man, whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air." These creatures had, perhaps, been abused to purposes of idolatry and sin, as they were in the ages after the flood. But God, in his mercy, allowed man time for repentance, and said, "Yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years," or I will wait that time, if, happily, he may turn from his evil ways, and live. Noah was, in the mean time, ordered to prepare an Ark of sufficient dimensions to hold him, and his family, and some of every sort of beast, and creeping thing, and fowl. Noah proceeded, the Ark increased in size, while man, probably, only hardened his heart; and, instead of attending to the preacher and his work, ridiculed both. Noah, however, was proof against their insults. Another very remarkable circumstance was, that Enoch, who had been manifested as a prophet of God, had named one of his sons *Methuselah* which signifies *He dieth and water*

is sent forth, as a prediction and warning of *the flood*; and, so, just as the righteous and warning Noah has finished his Ark, *Methuselah dies*. The work being finished, Noah and his wife, and his three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, with their wives, entered the Ark. All this was, probably, imputed to *fanaticism*, to “being righteous over-much.” But, behold, a most extraordinary procession! Some of all living creatures, except the inhabitants of the waters, move in pairs to the ark, the clean animals in seven pairs, the unclean by single pairs: and not the tame animals only, but the lion, the leopard, the bear, the wolf, all have laid aside their ferocity, and, as to Adam, in Paradise, now submit to the dominion of Noah, in the Ark. Surely this must have startled the infidels of the world before the flood! Could the *fanaticism* of Noah influence the beasts of the forest? No, no power inferior to the God who made them. They entered, “and the Lord shut them in.” (vii. 16.) No rain, however, immediately ensued. If the sight of the animals so marshalled had, for a moment, staggered the minds of the unbelievers, when all were shut in, but no rain descended,—like Pharaoh, who hardened himself more and more on the cessation of each plague,—their scoffs, their reproaches, and their outrages, were, probably, increased.

But the judgments of God, though slow, are sure. His long-suffering is great, but his vengeance is terrible,—the day of grace is expired. “And it came to pass, after seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth. In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the

windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights."

We know what distress what *we* call a *flood* causes with *us*; when, after rain falling a little heavier than usual, or a few hours, or days, longer than common, our earth is rendered wet, and the brooks and the rivers are swelled: What was the distress in a neighbouring town*, when, a little more than a year ago, the river rose beyond its usual overflowings, and entered the lower apartments of almost all the houses: when cottages were washed down, bridges blown up, roads and lands torn away, and cattle carried off in the torrents:—yet all this is as *nothing*—a drop to the ocean, compared with what took place, when "the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened." Now, indeed, while the torrents pour upon them from above, and the floods assail them in every direction on the earth, they feel that the exhortations and warnings of Noah were "the words of truth and soberness," (Acts xxvi. 25.); and in vain do they wish to be *with him* in the so-much despised and ridiculed *Ark*. The trees are climbed, the mountains are ascended; but there is no refuge. Where are their provisions? Famine is added to cold and wet—many plunge into the waters in despair: the waters rise above the highest mountains,—the last inhabitants of a sinful world are ingulphed, and "fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail:" (vii. 20.) all the world was *one water*, and on it rode Noah and his family, and the creatures, "safe under the protection of the Most High." (Psalm xci. 1.)

"And God made *a wind* to pass over the earth,

* St. Neot's, Oct. 30 and 31, 1823. This Sermon was preached Feb. 13, 1825.

and the waters assuaged ; the fountains, also, of the deep, and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained ; and the waters returned from off the earth continually : and, after an hundred and fifty days, the waters were abated. And the Ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat." On the 10th of the 9th month, the waters were abated. On the 1st of the 10th month, the tops of the mountains were seen. On the 12th of the 11th month, Noah opened a window, and sent forth a *raven*, which found sufficient dry land, and the carcasses of the dead animals for his food, and did not return. After seven days, Noah sent forth a *dove*, which, finding no convenient shelter and food, returned. After another seven days, it was sent forth again, and returned with an olive leaf in its bill, a sign that the olive trees were flourishing. On the 5th of the 12th month, he sent him forth again, and he returned no more.

"And it came to pass in the six hundredth and first year," that is of Noah's life, in the 1st month, the 1st day of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth : and Noah removed the covering of the Ark, and looked, and behold, the face of the ground was dry. And in the 2nd month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, was the earth dried. And God spake unto Noah, saying, "Go forth of the Ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee. Bring forth every living thing with thee." So that Noah and his family were in the Ark a year and ten days.

"And Noah" and his family "went forth, and he builded an altar unto the Lord, and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and

offered burnt-offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled a sweet savour: and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth: neither will I again smite any more every living thing as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease."

God, then, proceeded to pronounce a *blessing* on Noah and his sons, and to establish a *covenant* with them, and every living thing, and set his Bow in the cloud, called by the Psalmist "the faithful witness in heaven," (Psalm lxxxix. 36.,) as a *Token* of that covenant,—as was related in the first lesson at this morning's service, and in the passage selected now as my text.

The latter part of this chapter, from the 20th verse, is not read in the church when it is appointed as the Sunday lesson; but it contains an account of a transaction which seems to require a few remarks. We are told that "Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard." When Noah is first mentioned, (v. 29.) it is said that Lamech, his father, "called his name Noah," which signifies *rest*, or *refreshing*; "saying, this same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed." By which some understand that he was to free mankind from a great deal of toil, by improving the art of husbandry, and inventing such instruments as made it more easy*. But, if such interpretation be admitted, as part of its import, we must not forget the *blessing*

* See Orton on the verse.

of God upon Noah and his posterity, which promised "seed-time and harvest," and, probably, a greater degree of fertility than was experienced from the fall to the flood.

Noah, however, "planted a vineyard; and he drank of the wine, and was drunken." Probably, not knowing the nature and effects of wine, he drank too much and was intoxicated. The best man may be once overtaken unawares, but we do not read that this sin was repeated; and we may be assured it was not, or Noah would not have been called a righteous and a perfect man. But Canaan saw him, it is supposed, in this state, and told his father Ham*, and they ridiculed him, and Ham told Shem and Japheth; but they, like pious and dutiful children, joined not in the mockeries, but threw a veil over the frailty of their father, while Canaan drew down upon himself and his posterity an awful *curse*. Let this be a warning to those who delight to make others drunken, and expose them to mockery and shame.

Such is the history of "the world of the ungodly," and its destruction by an overwhelming flood. And we have the promise of God that it never shall be so destroyed again; and we look upon the *Rainbow*, the Token of the Covenant, "the faithful witness in heaven," and are assured that God's word shall stand. But, have the ungodly of "the world that *now is*" *no cause for fear*? Yes, verily, they have: the same sure word of God has warned *them*, that, though the earth will never more be destroyed by *water*, it *will* one day, most assuredly, be destroyed by *FIRE*. Hear the words of St. Peter, in

* See Newton on the Prophecies, Dissertation I.

He must have known of -
 the fact of his drinking the wine
 but he is not condemned -

his 2nd Epistle, the third chapter, and beginning at the first verse :

“ This second Epistle, I now write unto you ; in both which I stir up your minds by way of remembrance ; that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy Prophets, and of the commandment of us, the Apostles of the Lord and Saviour : knowing this, first, that there shall come, in the last days, scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, where is the promise of his coming ? for, since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation : for this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the Word of God, the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water, and in the water : whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished : but the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word, are kept in store, reserved unto FIRE against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is long suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night ; in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up. Seeing, then, that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be, in all holy conversation and godliness ; looking for, and hasting unto, the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the

elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless, *we*, according to his promise, look for new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless; and account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation."

I have been thus particular in stating this passage at length, because it most nearly and awfully concerns every one of *us*; and we ought to pay as much attention to it, as if St. Peter had addressed his Epistle to *the church at GRANSDEN*, or were himself amongst us, delivering this prophetic warning with his own mouth. And we know not *how soon* it may be: it may be *to-morrow*, it may be *this day*. But, if this "day that burneth as an oven" (Mal. iv. 1.) should be delayed for many years, still the day of DEATH *must come*—and that may be *soon*—very soon—to any one of *us*, and "as death leaves us, so will the day of judgment find us." Hear the words of our blessed Lord himself, (Matt. xxiv. 37, &c.) "As the days of Noe were, so shall, also, the coming of the Son of man be. For, as, in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage," (that is thinking only of the concerns of *this life*; for, though innocent in themselves, yet, if indulged to the exclusion of heavenly things, then they become criminal,) "until the day that Noe entered into the Ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away: so shall, also, the coming of the Son-of-man be."—"Watch, therefore; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that, if the good man of the house, had known in what watch

the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore, be ye, also, ready ; for, in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."

And, in this expectation, let us imitate Noah,—as held up for our example by St. Paul, (Heb. xi. 7.)—who, "by faith," that is, believing these things, "being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an Ark to the saving of his house ; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith."

But how, it will, perhaps, be asked, are *we* to prepare *an Ark*, by which we may save ourselves from this dreadful destruction? Why *that* is already prepared for us by Christ, in *his Church* ; into which we are admitted by *baptism*, and, in which, *if* we continue *faithful members*, we shall, undoubtedly, be saved. This is what St. Peter declares, in his first Epistle, (ch. iii. 20, 21.,) where, speaking of *the Ark*, he says, "wherein few, that is eight, souls, were saved *by water*. The like figure whereunto BAPTISM doth also, now, save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

In conformity with this, *the Church*, in the first prayer at the service of *baptism*, prays thus: "Almighty and everlasting God, who, of thy great mercy, didst save Noah and his family, in the Ark, from perishing by water;" and so on; "we beseech thee, for thine infinite mercies, that thou wilt mercifully look upon this child ; wash him and sanctify him with the Holy Ghost ; that he, being delivered from thy wrath, may be received into *the Ark of*

Christ's Church; and, being steadfast in faith, joyful through hope, and rooted in Charity, may so pass the waves of this troublesome world, that, finally, he may come to the land of everlasting life; there to reign with Thee, world without end, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

But we have, not only "the waves of this troublesome world" to pass, there is "the lake of fire and brimstone," (Rev. xx.) of "everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels," (Matt. xxv. 41.) which will overwhelm the *present* "world of the ungodly," when the Son of man, enthroned in glory, in judgment with his holy angels, shall pass sentence upon them. And, lo! there is a *Rainbow* round about the throne in sight like unto an emerald." (Rev. iv. 3.) And is not this a *Token of a Covenant* to the faithful disciples of Jesus Christ? Undoubtedly it is. Those "which sleep in Jesus," and those "which are alive and remain, shall be caught up, together with them, in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall"—"ever be with the Lord,"—"in the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world." (Matt. xxv. 34)—"Wherefore," adds St. Paul, "comfort one another with these words." (see 1 Thes. iv. 14—18.)

Let *us*, then, ever look upon the "Bow in the cloud" with awful admiration. While we look upon it, the Great God of heaven and earth looks upon it likewise. It reads a lesson, at once dreadful and delightful,—dreadful to the ungodly, delightful to those who have an interest in Jesus Christ. It tells us, that the world of the ungodly, in the time of Noah, was destroyed by a flood, and that the earth will never be so destroyed again; but it as assuredly tells us, that, when the day of grace shall be

passed with the ungodly of the present world, and God will no more, by his Spirit, “strive with man,” again shall “the fountains of the great deep be broken up, and the windows of heaven be opened,”—not indeed to send down *rain* upon the earth,—but “brimstone and fire” from the earth, and “from the Lord out of heaven :” (Gen. xix. 24.) and that there is none other refuge from the wrath to come, but with Him who will sit upon the throne, with a *Rain-bow* round about.

Blessing, and honour, and glory, and thanksgiving, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne. Amen and Amen.

SERMON VIII.

THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT.—GENESIS X—XIX.

THE ORIGIN OF NATIONS, THE BUILDING OF BABEL, ABRAHAM
AND LOT, AND THE DESTRUCTION OF SODOM.

GENESIS xix. 27, 28, 29.

And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the Lord: and he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and behold, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace. And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt.

THE course of our hasty Commentary on the Bible led us, on Sunday last, to take a view of “the world of the ungodly,” and the destruction of it by a flood, from which Noah and his family were preserved in an Ark, giving us a lively emblem of the preservation of the sons of God in these our later days in the Ark of Christ’s Church. Not that all that are admitted into the Church, now, by Baptism, will be finally saved, any more than all those were who were in the Ark with Noah; for we find that *Ham*, after having been a witness of the sins of the world before the flood, and of the awful vengeance of God upon them, was saved only to intail *a curse* upon himself and a posterity as wicked as those upon whom the flood came. “Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.” (1 Cor. x. 12.)

“Be not high-minded, but fear.” (Rom. xi. 20.) Ham could not have been saved but in the Ark. Nor could he be saved, finally, without holiness. We can be saved only in Christ, and not in Christ without holiness.

The course of our Sunday Lessons leads us, to-day, to consider that portion of the book of Genesis from the Xth to the XIXth chapter, both included.

The xth chapter may appear to many to contain nothing but a mere list of names, an uninteresting account of the descendants of Shem, Ham and Japheth. But, says Bishop Watson, “it is one of the most valuable, and the most venerable records of antiquity. It explains what all profane historians were ignorant of—the origin of nations:”—“it gives such an account of the peopling the earth after the deluge, as no other book in the world ever did give; and the truth of which all other books in the world, which contain any thing on the subject, confirm. The last verse of the chapter says—“These are the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations: and by these were the nations divided in the earth, after the flood.” It would require great learning to trace out, precisely, either the actual situation of all the countries in which these founders of empires settled, or to ascertain the extent of their dominions. This, however, has been done by various authors, to the satisfaction of all competent judges.”—“But without the aid of learning, any man who can barely read his Bible, and has but heard of such people as the *Assyrians*, the *Elamites*, the *Lydians*, the *Medes*, the *Ionians*, the *Thracians*, will readily acknowledge that they had *Assur*, and *Elam*, and *Lud*, and *Madai*, and *Javan*,

and *Tiros*, grandsons of Noah, for their respective founders *."

The XIth chapter opens with stating that "the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech," and goes on to inform us how there came to be such a variety of languages. After the flood, "God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth." (ix. 1.) But this chapter informs us, that "it came to pass, as" a certain people "journeyed from the east, they found a plain, in the land of Shinar;" and, contrary to the command of God, that some of them should still keep journeying on to replenish the earth, "they dwelt there. And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." Now the leader, or chief, or king, of this people was Nimrod, of whom we are told, in the Xth chapter (8—10), that "he began to be a mighty one in the earth: he was a mighty hunter before the Lord." Probably he began by hunting wild beasts, which giving him habits of daring and ferocity, and gaining the admiration of men, he acquired influence, and began, first, to rule, and, then, to tyrannize over and destroy them. "He was a mighty hunter before the Lord." The expression "before the Lord" may be used only to denote something of distinguished eminence, as where it is said (Gen. xiii. 13.) "the men of Sodom were wicked, and sinners

* Answer to Paine. Letter iii.

before the Lord exceedingly.” But the Septuagint has it, that “he was mighty *against* the Lord;” that is, probably, he persecuted the people of God; and this tower had on its top a temple to the Sun, or Baal, and was built for idolatrous purposes; and the worship was of the most impure kind *. We shall not wonder, then, that “the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the children of men builded. And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language, and this they begin to do: and, now, nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and then confound their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech. So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of the earth, and they left off to build the city.” Three years, it is said, they prepared their materials, and twenty-two years they carried on their building †. So that some progress had been made in it, if it was not completed: but, probably, it was. “Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of the earth.” And, thus, the very thing which they intended to prevent happened to them: and thus, or by *some means*, it is that God frustrates all our high schemes formed against him, or those formed without having his honour and glory in view. These are our *Babels*, and these he renders confusion and vanity. How simple was the process, how wide and

* Bryant’s Analysis of Ancient Mythology, Vol. III. p. 45, and Howell’s Mythological Dict. Art. *Babel*.

† Brown’s Dict. of the Bible. Art. *Babel*.

important the effect. He who gave man reason and speech to express his thoughts, can, in a moment, withhold, or alter, both. How does the variety of languages prevent the intercourse of nations for the purposes of commerce, or to spread the knowledge of God. Christ, therefore, to remedy this evil to his first disciples, gave them miraculously the gift of speaking in any and all languages. We, in these days, can learn different languages only by great care and labour: but it is done; and God's word is translated into *many*—and will, we trust, in time, be translated into ALL languages,—that every nation may have, in their own tongues, the blessed Scriptures of God. O may this work be multiplied and hastened, and may God's *word* produce in every nation the blessed fruits of *faith* and *holiness*, till mankind shall again be *one people*, speaking *one language*, under ONE GOD, the eternal, holy, blessed and glorious TRINITY.

This idolatry of some of the descendants of Ham happened but about an hundred years, or a little more, after the flood, while the remembrance of it must have been yet fresh in men's minds, while the Ark yet remained upon the mountains of Ararat, (for Josephus says remains of it were there in *his* day*), and while Noah and Shem were yet alive, so early was the falling off again from God, so speedy, so headlong is the progress of sin. Nay there was idolatry even amongst the descendants of Shem, for Abram was called out from amongst them;—and let us not forget to say, that there were some righteous among the children of Canaan, as Melchizedek, of whom we read, in the XIVth chapter, (18.), that he

* Antiq. B. xx. Ch. ii. § 2.

was king of *Salem*, or peace, was “priest of the most high God.”

In the XIth chapter, the 27th verse, the first mention is made of Abram; and, in the XIIth chapter, we have an account of God’s calling him away from his country, his kindred and his father’s house. But, as the first lesson, at morning service, on *Good Friday*, is the XXIInd chapter, which treats of the most remarkable instance of the faith of Abraham, in his readiness to sacrifice his son Isaac, I shall defer the consideration of the call and faith of Abraham to that day; and shall, now, consider only such parts of his character as necessarily occur in treating the history of Lot and Sodom.

Lot was the son of Haran, Abram’s brother, who dying early, when Abram left the land of Haran (so named from his brother, after his death), he took Lot with him into the land of Canaan. But, a famine arising, they went into Egypt; and, after some time, returned with so many flocks and herds, (see xiii. 5, &c.), that “the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together.”—“And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram’s cattle and the herdmen of Lot’s cattle.” And what was the consequence? Did Abram, as the elder and the uncle, rebuke Lot and his herdsmen? Or did he send them away from him entirely? Or did he take the best part of the country for himself, and leave the worst for them? No such thing. Abram’s conduct, on this occasion, is a lesson to all who may be concerned in any differences; the beauty of the reply is incomparable: “And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen: for we be brethren. Is not the whole land

before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or, if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left." And what did Lot? Did he, as was his duty, leave the best to his elder and his uncle? or request Abram to take his choice? No such thing, "Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where,"—"even as the garden of the Lord." "Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other. Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom. But the men of Sodom were wicked, and sinners before the Lord exceedingly."

Happy had it been for Lot, had his riches never increased; or, at least, that, with his riches, his affection for them had not increased also; or that he had never beheld the fertile vale of Jordan to covet it. Lot has gained his heart's desire; but has he gained peace and happiness? No. He has lost the society of Abraham, the friend of God, and he is got amongst the wicked men of Sodom, who were "sinners before the Lord exceedingly." But this is not all, Chedorlaomer and his allies, as we are told in the XIVth chapter, ravage the country of Sodom and Gomorrah, and take all the goods, and take Lot and his goods, and carry him away captive. But Abram is still his friend, as brave in war, as he is mild in peace; he arms his three hundred and eighteen servants; and, with these and his allies, Mamre, Aner and Eshcol, he pursues the conquerors, and surprises them, at night, at the springs of Jordan, recovers Lot with his family and substance, with the rest of the captives

and the plunder of Sodom. In his return, Melchizedek meets him at Salem, entertains him with provisions, blesses him, and receives from him the tithes of the spoil. The young king of Sodom, generously, offers him all that he has recovered, except the men and women; which Abram, more generously, refuses.

The XVth, XVIth, and XVIIth, chapters contain accounts of Abram, which, as I said before, will better come under our consideration on Good Friday.

The XVIIIth chapter opens with an account how “the Lord appeared unto” Abram “in the plains of Mamre:” as “he sat in the tent-door, in the heat of the day: and he lift up his eyes, and looked, and, lo, three *men*,” they are called, “stood by him.” There was something, however, in their appearance different from common men; for, when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent-door, and *bowed himself to the ground*, and said, MY LORD, if, now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant.” These *men*, or *angels* in the likeness of men, he addresses as *my Lord*, as if they were only *one*. This is considered by our Church as a visible manifestation of the Holy Trinity to Abraham, and which Abraham seems to have known and acknowledged; and, accordingly, the Church appoints this chapter for the first lesson, at evening service, on *Trinity Sunday*, at which time I purpose to consider it again, along with the first chapter of Genesis, and other places, on which we found the doctrine of THE HOLY TRINITY. I will merely observe here, that, after Abraham had entertained them, and they had promised the birth of Isaac, two of them departed, and it is said, (verse 22.) “but Abraham stood yet before THE LORD;” and, whenever an *angel* is represented speaking as God, or as

the sovereign of the Church, we are to consider him as the Creator and Redeemer, the Messiah, making himself in some way visible to man. He is called by Malachi, (iii. 1.,) "the Angel of the Covenant," as he publishes the plan, fulfils the condition, and executes the promise, of the Covenant of Grace.

The Lord proceeded to disclose to Abraham his intention to destroy the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim and Bela. Moved with compassion, chiefly to Lot, Abraham interceded for their preservation, and God acceded to every intercession. God promised to spare them, if fifty, if forty, if twenty, or even ten righteous persons should be found there.

The XIXth chapter informs us of the arrival of the two Angels at Sodom, while Lot was sitting in the gate ; as, probably, he did so, knowing the wickedness of the inhabitants of the city, to invite strangers to his hospitable roof, under which they might be safe. They declined his invitation ; but he pressed them more urgently, and they accepted it. The inhabitants, however, assembled in a riotous manner about the house, demanding the strangers to be given up to them, when Lot went out, and made the unwarrantable proposal to them contained in the 7th and the 8th verses ; thus, offering to do a certain evil, under the hope of effecting a supposed good. This is contrary both to reason and religion ; and such *expedients* never succeed. "Of two evils we may chuse the *least*, but of two *sins* we must *not* chuse *either* *." The Angels, however, rescued Lot, by pulling him into the house, and struck the people with blindness.

* Orton on the place.

The Angels, then, informed Lot of the purpose they had in hand, in respect to Sodom and the other cities; and desired him, if he had any near connections, besides those who were with him in the house, that he would warn them, and carry them out with him from the place. “And,” it is said, (verse 14), “Lot went out, and spake unto his sons-in-law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get ye out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons-in-law.” But, it is to be observed, that the word in the Hebrew, which is here translated had *married*, signifies only *had espoused* his daughters and were not as yet married to them*; which makes it consistent with what is said in the 8th verse.

Even Lot and his wife and daughters, in the morning, wanted rousing and hastening, in so much that the Angels took them by their hands, and led them forth, and bade them not linger, nor look behind, but escape for their lives to the mountain. The little city of Bela, however, presenting itself, Lot interceded for that, that he might find a refuge there; and, though the city of Sodom would have been granted to the intercession of Abraham, had there been but *ten* righteous in it, and ten could not be found, yet, now, the whole city of Bela, (called *Zoar* or *the little one*, from this circumstance) is saved at the intercession of Lot,—so effectual are the intercessions of the righteous for even the most wicked.

“The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar.” Lot had warned his sons-in-law the evening before, “but he seemed as one that mocked,” and they, probably, had spread a report in

* Reading, vol. i. p. 270.

the city, and the mockery was universal, else some would have left it with Lot. Lot, however, goes out;—but the sun arises as usual, it is clear and sunshine, and the city continues in its luxury and lust.

But soon a *change* does take place. Perhaps, at first, only a gloom,—a gathering,—a clouding,—a darkness,—a blackness, and a fiery red;—and, now, probably, begins a consternation among the inhabitants,—and too late they find that the warning of Lot, whom they had styled “this one fellow,” (ver. 9) was not without cause, and that he was indeed their best of friends: “Then the Lord rained upon Sodom, and upon Gomorrah, brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven; and he overthrew those cities and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.”

And, behold! even one of the four who were led out of the city of destruction, reaches not the city of refuge granted to the intercession of Lot. “His wife,” whether impelled by mere idle curiosity, or unbelief, or regretting the pleasures, and the sins, and the sinners which she had left, “looked back from behind him,—and she became a pillar of salt.” —“The lightning,” probably, “blasted her. She was struck dead, but not thrown down. She stood erect, like a pillar, or statue. The brimstone and salt” and ashes “which were rained down, fell upon her, and not only crusted her over, but penetrated through her whole body. Thus she was instantly petrified; changed into a substance that would endure for many ages; a metallic salt. *Josephus* tells us that he himself had seen it*.” And, therefore, probably, our blessed Lord himself, and most

* Orton on the place.

of the Jews in his time, had seen it; and he holds her up as a warning to all future ages, "Remember Lot's wife." (Luke xvii. 32.)

And where is the faithful, the friendly Abraham, all this while? Lot, abiding in the city which was to be destroyed in the morning, slept and required awakening; "when the morning arose, then the Angels *hastened* Lot, saying, *Arise*, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city." But Abraham of himself "gat up early in the morning, to the place where he stood before the Lord; and he looked towards Sodom and Gomorrah, and towards all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace." How different was the prospect now to what it was when Abram and Lot beheld it together, when they saw "all the plain of Jordan"—"well watered every where," with its pastures, its corn-fields, its herbs and its trees, "even as the garden of the Lord." (xiii. 10). Thus, as the Psalmist says, "A fruitful land maketh he barren, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein." (Psalm cvii. 34.)

In my Discourse on Sunday last, in speaking of the destruction of the world and all that were in it, by a flood, in the days of Noah, and the promise which God had given that he would never again destroy the world by water,—and had set his bow in the cloud, as "the faithful witness," or *token* of this promise, or Covenant,—I mentioned, that God had nevertheless, declared, by his blessed Son, and his Prophets and Apostles, that he *will* again destroy the world, and *that* by FIRE; whereof the destruction of Sodom and the other cities was a type, or warning. Our blessed Lord himself tells us, that,

“as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded;” they went on as if life and the world were to last for ever, given up to worldly and sensual enjoyments, and never giving a thought to God, and his commandments, and a judgment to come: “but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all: even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.” (Luke xvii. 28—30.)

Of that day he gives this particular and awful account: (Matt. xxv. 31—41.) “When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy Angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another,—on his right hand and on his left. Then shall the King say to them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.—Then shall he say, also, to them on his left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” And, oh! what a destruction will that be! All the destructions that have ever been, from the creation of the world, to the last hour, if put together, would be as nothing to it. How dreadful must have been the destruction by the flood! But, here, all who were destroyed by the flood will be raised again to judgment, and suffer “the vengeance of eternal fire,”—here too “the angels who kept not their first estate,”—the devil and all his *legions* (Mark v. 9.) “he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day,” (Jude, 6.)—here all the ungodly from the

flood to this time, and to the day of judgment, will be condemned to this everlasting fire.

[Within the time which I have resided here, what have been the sins which have been, as St. Paul said to the Corinthians, (1 Cor. v. 1.) “reported commonly,”—and, it is to be feared, not without cause,—to have been committed in this and the neighbouring parish * ? Fornication, cohabitation often before marriage, adultery, adultery with the consent of the husband, the near and nearest of kin cohabiting with the same woman, the father cohabiting with his daughter,—nay, it is even said,—But I forbear.—Of the committers of these abominations few, if any, probably, are present,—no names are mentioned. Let the guilty, if they shall hear it, condemn their own hearts, and repent, and turn to God.]

But these are not the only sins which will shut out a man from heaven, and condemn him to everlasting burnings : “ Know ye not,” says St. Paul, (1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.) “ that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God ? Be not deceived : neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.” And, again, in the Revelation, (xxi. 8.), “ he that sat upon

* The churches of Great and Little Gransden, though in different counties, are less than half a mile from each other ; and some of the houses in Little Gransden parish are nearer to Great Gransden church than some in its own parish. And, as there is only one service, on a Sunday, at Little Gransden, alternately morning and afternoon, and the sermon at Great Gransden is alternate, likewise, and at that time when there is no service at Little Gransden, several of the inhabitants of that parish attend the service and sermon.

the throne," "the Alpha and Omega," said, "the fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone which is the second death." (See also xxii. 15.) Our blessed Lord, when he sent his disciples to preach the Gospel, and to say, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand," said to them, "whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house, or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah, in the day of judgment, than for that city." (Matt. x. 14, 15.) And, again, he upbraided "the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: Woe unto thee, Chorazin; woe unto thee, Bethsaida: for, if the mighty works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented, long ago, in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you. And, thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shall be brought down to hell: for, if the mighty works which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But, I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee." (Matt. xi. 20—24.) "He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me." (Luke x. 16.) These are useful warnings to those who despise Christ and his Gospel in any age, and in any place.

But the language of God still is, "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee,

Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim?" (Hosea xi. 8.)

Did Abraham intercede for Sodom, and would God have spared it, had there been *ten* righteous in it? Did Lot intercede for Zoar, and did God spare it though *not one righteous* was therein? The Psalmist tells us that "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that would understand, and seek after God. But they are all gone out of the way, they are altogether become abominable, there is none that doeth good, no, not one." (xiv. 3, 4.) And, when *we* shall stand before the judgment-seat, *who* has any *righteousness* to plead before God? "None. No not one."

But there is **ONE, THE RIGHTEOUS ONE**, (1 John ii. 1.), who hath laid down his life a ransom for ours, whose righteousness will be imputed to us, and who continually maketh intercession for us at the right hand of God, and who "is able, also, to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by Him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." (Heb. vii. 25.)

When **THE LAST MORNING** shall have arrived, and the sun is risen upon the unconscious Sodom of this world,—then—in that "great and terrible day of the Lord," when he "will show wonders in the heavens and the earth," when "the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood," and "blood and fire and pillars of smoke," (Joel ii. 30, 31.) shall make men's hearts to fail them for fear—a *deliverance* will be wrought for those who have gained an interest in **THE GREAT INTERCESSOR**, they will "be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and will ever be with the Lord," the Creator, the Redeemer, the Sanctifier,—Three Persons in one Godhead, blessed for evermore. *Amen, Amen.*

SERMON IX.

THE SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT.—GENESIS XXIII—XXXVI.

ISAAC, ESAU AND JACOB.

GENESIS XXVII. 36.

And he said, Is not he rightly named JACOB ?

IN my last Discourse, I treated of the Destruction of Sodom, and the history of Abraham and Lot, so far as related to that awful event, and we reserve for Good Friday, the account of the Call of Abraham, the father of the faithful, and that signal instance of his faith, his readiness to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac, in obedience to the command of God. The history leads us on, this day, to consider, farther, the account of the life of Isaac and his sons, Esau and Jacob, particularly Jacob's fraud, in supplanting his brother, in the blessing intended, by his father, for him, which made Esau to exclaim, "Is he not rightly named *Jacob*?" which word means the *supplanter*, or *deceiver*, a name which he too well deserved; and the act by which he obtained it was the cause of multiplied troubles to himself and his connections.

But we must first go back in our history :

The xxiiiid chapter gives an account of the death of Sarah, of Abraham's purchasing a burying-place, and the funeral of Sarah : which circumstances, though of small importance in themselves, were of great consequence, as they fixed Abraham and his

posterity in the promised land ; and, by this, he took possession of it.

Travellers, who have passed the deserts of Arabia and of Africa, give us an account, that, after having travelled for days over loose and burning sands, where nothing of herb or tree is to be seen, and liable to be overwhelmed by the sand caught up in whirlwinds, or to be suffocated by the hot and pestilential blasts, they come to some spot where verdure and fertility prevail, where water flows pure and refreshing, and all is beauty and delight. Something like this, occasionally, happens to us, in our progress through the Bible ; after the accounts of the world of the ungodly and its destruction by a flood,—of the bold attempt of the builders of Babel, and their dispersion by the confusion of languages,—of the wickedness of the cities of the plain of Jordan, and the destruction of them by fire,—we come to a little portion of domestic history, where the fear of God is the prevailing character, and where the soul delights to rest and to take refreshment. Of this description is the xxivth chapter of Genesis, in which we behold the venerable patriarch Abraham, when a hundred and forty years passing over his “ hoary head,” “ in the way of righteousness,” had rendered it indeed “ a crown of glory.” (Prov. xvi. 31.) He was anxious to see his son united to “ a help meet for him,”—not to one of “ the daughters of men,”—of the Canaanites among whom he sojourned, whose recommendation might be that she was “ fair,” or noble, or wealthy, but to one from his own country and kindred, who feared God. For this purpose, he sent his old and faithful servant, or steward, Eliezer, who, praying for the guidance of God throughout the business, was favoured in his journey and re-

turned with Rebecca, “a virtuous woman,” whose “price is far above rubies.” (Prov. xxxi. 10.)

The xxvth chapter brings us to the second marriage, and to the death, of Abraham ; who, we are expressly told by St. Paul, (Heb. xi. 1. 13.,) “died in faith ;” and “faith,” he says, “is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” That is, he not only believed that God would give the land of Canaan to his posterity ; but that his soul was immortal, and he would receive him and all his faithful descendants into a better Canaan in heaven : “By faith,” saith St. Paul, “Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed, and went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise : for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”—That is, he looked for a city,—not like his own city of tabernacles, or tents, which were pitched upon the ground, and had *no foundations* ;—but he looked for a city, which had deep, permanent, and immoveable foundations, because the builder and maker of it was the Almighty Jehovah. “These,” continues St. Paul, “all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things, declare, plainly, that they seek a country. And, truly, if they had been mindful of that country, from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned : but, now, they desire a better country, that is an heavenly. Wherefore God is not

ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city." And that they *do live*, and inherit this city, we have the express assurance of our Lord, who speaks of God as "the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob:" and adds, "God is not the God of the *dead*, but of the *LIVING*." (Matt. xxii. 32.) And, again, "many shall come from the east, and from the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. viii. 11.) And when the wretched, but happy, Lazarus died, (wretched as to this perishing world, but, oh! how happy as to a glorious immortality,) he was carried by angels into *Abraham's bosom*. To understand which expression, it is necessary to explain to you, that the Jews did not *sit* at their meals, as we do, but lay all along upon a sort of *couches*, so that one lay *before* another, or with his head near the other's *bosom*. So Abraham is represented as if at table in the kingdom of God; and he, who was rejected of the proud and wealthy upon earth, is carried by the most honourable conveyance, to the next place to the father of the faithful. O may *we* all be found worthy to "sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob:" but, to attain this, we must "hear Moses and the prophets." (Luke xvi. 19—31.)

A portion of this chapter, beginning at the 12th verse, gives an account of the descendants of Ishmael, (called afterwards, the *Hagarens*, from his mother *Hagar*,—and, still later, the *Saracens*, from *Sarah*, whose handmaid Hagar had been) of their princes, their towns, and their castles. And of Isaac it is said, "that, after the death of Abraham," "God blessed his son Isaac: and Isaac dwelt by the well *Lahai-roi*; which means the well of him that liveth and seeth

me," which was the well discovered by God to Hagar, when she and her son Ishmael were perishing with thirst in the wilderness. We have then, an account of the birth of Esau and Jacob; and of Esau, when he was pressed by hunger, selling his birth-right to him for a mess of pottage. St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, (xii. 14—17.) speaks of this transaction, and exhorts them, to "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord; looking diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness springing up, trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; lest there be any fornicator," that is, one who should forsake true religion, or abuse the liberty of the Gospel, "or profane person as Esau, who, for one morsel of meat, sold his birth-right. For ye know, how that, afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears." And how many have followed his example, and forfeited their eternal inheritance, and lost their immortal souls, for some poor momentary gratification?

The xxvith chapter represents Isaac as being guilty of the same fault, as his father, Abraham, had, twice, been guilty of, and for which he was reproved by God, the denying his wife, and saying she was his sister. The matter, however, was explained, and Abimelech and Isaac entered into a covenant. This chapter, too, informs us of the marriage of Esau to two Canaanitish women, "which were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebecca."

The xxviith chapter presents us with Isaac old: it is computed that he was about one hundred and thirty-seven years of age, and his sons fifty-seven*,

* See Horne on the Study of the Sacred Scriptures, vol. ii. p. 627, &c.

—and his eyes were dim; and, thinking he might not have long to live, and Esau being both his first-born son, and his favourite, (as he was a hunter, and procured him venison, and made savoury dishes for him,) he resolved to give him his blessing, which was, in those days, a sort of solemn Last Will and Testament; made under the sanction of God. And, in order to this, Isaac desired Esau to go and kill him some venison, and to make the savoury meat. Now God had expressly said, when these children were in the womb, that “the elder should serve the younger;” (xxvi. 23.) that is, should have *the blessing*, which included *the promised seed*, in preference. This alarmed Rebecca, whose favourite was Jacob. And what did she do? Did she remind Isaac fearlessly, but mildly, that God intended the blessing for Jacob, and that Esau had profanely despised, and sold, his birthright? No: this was what she *should have done*; but she had recourse to an *expedient*, to artifice and falsehood. She desired Jacob to dress some kid after Esau’s manner, and to feign himself to be Esau; and, so, obtain the blessing. Jacob objected, lest he should be discovered, and obtain a *curse*, instead of a blessing; but his mother silenced him with “Upon me be thy curse, my son.” Two kids were killed, the meat was dressed, Jacob was dressed in Esau’s clothes; and, as it was said of Esau, when he was born, that “he was all over like a hairy garment,” (xxv. 25.) the skins of the kids were put upon the smooth of his neck, and upon his hands, made, probably, into gloves. Thus prepared, he went into his aged, blind father, with a lie in his mouth, that he was Esau, and that God had provided him so speedily with his prey. A doubt arose with Isaac about his voice, but the roughness of his skin prevailed, and the blessing was given. No

sooner, however, was it pronounced, than Esau returned; and he who had despised his birthright laments bitterly for the blessing: a blessing, however, is given. And, now, behold this family; the parents with their twin sons, the parents weak enough to have their favourites, the father intending to give his blessing contrary to God's will; the mother striving for the blessing, but in a *way* contrary to God's will, likewise; Esau a profane person, and Jacob a supplanter by craft! How has the business succeeded? Why, as *craft* and *falsehood* usually do, to the plague of those who practise it. Esau is angry with his brother, and not without some cause,—no provocation, however, could warrant his intention to *slay* his brother. (v. 41.) Jacob is obliged to fly for his life; and the unhappy parents are left without a child to comfort them.

God sanctioned the *thing*, but not the *means*; and those who made use of the bad means suffered long and painfully on that account. What need have we to pray for *singleness of heart*! and that God would direct us in all our ways!

Before Jacob departed, however, Isaac gave him his blessing, solemnly and sincerely; and he went to seek a wife among his own kindred. And, now, behold him, who was to be the head of the many thousands of Israel, a fugitive from his incensed brother, a journier, alone, with only his staff and a few necessaries! After a journey of between thirty and forty miles, he comes to a place called *Luz*, that is, a place of *almond trees*; and night coming on, within a grove of almonds, he collects some stones to make him a pillow, and lays him down to rest. "And he *dreamed*, and behold a *ladder* set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to *heaven*: and

behold, the *Angels* of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, THE LORD stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth; and thou shalt spread abroad to the east and to the west, and to the north and to the south: and in thee, and in thy seed, shall all families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land: for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of. And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not." And he was afraid, and said, "How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar," that is, he, probably, took several stones, as a foundation, or pedestal, and set one particularly large upon them, "and poured oil upon the top of it:" oil which he, probably, had with him for his use upon his journey. "And he called the name of that place *Beth-el*," that is, *the house of God*. And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, "If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God: and this stone which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the *tenth* unto thee."

There are few passages of Scripture of greater interest than this. How forlorn are the apparent

circumstances of Jacob ; at a distance from his home and friends, a long journey before him, of which he knew not the way, the ground for his bed, and stones for his pillow, and the canopy of heaven his covering ; yet—he is under the peculiar care of God, “ his angels have charge concerning him,” (Psalm xci. 11.) and he is verily in “ the house of God.” And is it not so with *us*, if we live in the fear of God ? Yes, verily. His thousands of Angels are “ all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation.” (Heb. i. 14.) And peculiarly in “ the house of God,” (1 Cor. xi. 10.) there they keep their stations ; nay our blessed Lord himself hath said, “ when two, or three, are gathered together in my name,” that is, either in our churches, or our private houses, “ there am I”—that is, by his Spirit, “ in the midst of them.” (Matt. xviii. 20.)

The xxixth chapter gives an account of the arrival of Jacob in “ the land of the people of the east,” where his uncle Laban lived, and of his meeting with his younger daughter Rachel, as she was attending upon her father’s flocks. Jacob made himself known to her, and went home with her to her father’s house ; and, finding that he loved her, he offered to serve Laban for seven years, that he might have her as a wife. The seven years were completed ; but, he who had imposed upon his aged and *dark* father, and, feigning to be his brother, supplanted him with his father, is now supplanted, in his turn, and in the tenderness of his heart ; in the darkness of the night, Leah, the elder sister of Rachel, is imposed upon Jacob, instead of her whom he loved, and for whom the service of seven years had seemed but as a few days. The evil admits no remedy ; and, yet,

he strives to obviate it, by taking Rachel likewise, and serving another seven years. And, now, the evils of polygamy (of having more wives than one) ensue; and the remainder of this chapter, and a great part of the xxxth, are occupied by the envyings, and jealousies, and quarrels of the sisters who are joint wives. How wise is the appointment of God, of one man and one woman, an indissoluble union for life!

Jacob, having served Laban fourteen years for his daughter, now makes an agreement with him to serve him for hire, to be paid in sheep, or lambs, of a certain description. God influenced the breeding of the sheep, and gave a large increase to Jacob, which, when Laban perceived, like a covetous and unjust master, he changed the agreement of the kind which was to be Jacob's; God, however, still favoured Jacob; and Laban changed again and again, even to ten times; till,—as is often the fate of covetousness and craft,—he *over-reached himself*.

In the xxxist chapter, we find, that Laban and his sons began to be jealous of Jacob, and looked upon him with an altered countenance, when “the Lord said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred, and I will be with thee.” Jacob, fearing that Laban would oppose his departure, took the opportunity of Laban's being gone to a distance, to the shearing of his sheep, and departed with his wives, his children, his servants, his flocks and his herds. Laban heard of it; and, with his sons, pursued after them, and, on the seventh day, full of wrath, overtook them. God, however, “came to Laban, in a dream, by night, and said unto him, Take heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad.” The meeting, there-

fore, which seemed to threaten fatal consequences, ended in a friendly covenant, and Laban returned in peace.

“And Jacob went on his way,” continues the XXXIInd chapter, “and the angels of God met him. And, when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God’s host: and he called the name of that place *Mahanaim*,” that is *two hosts*, or *camp*s, probably, one before, and the other behind him. God was pleased to discover visibly to him, as he did, afterwards, to Elisha, (2 Kings vi. 16, 17.), those hosts which continually waited upon him, though not visible. This was a comfort and assurance to him, in his approaching trial with his brother Esau, to whom he sent messengers, and who returned, saying, that Esau came against him with four hundred men. It was, now, twenty years, at least, since Esau and Jacob had met, namely the fourteen years he served for Rachel, and six years a covenant servant for cattle. But some are of opinion, (and with the greatest appearance of truth) that, between the fourteen years he served for Rachel, and the six he served for hire, there was an interval of twenty years, in which he lived in Laban’s neighbourhood as a friend.* That is, that the twenty years, mentioned xxxi. 38, is one period, and the twenty years, mentioned in the 41st verse, is another. It would take too much time to enter fully into the question; and, as far as it concerns our present purpose, it is not of much consequence.

Jacob, however, prepared to meet his brother

* See Dr. Kennicott’s Remarks, p. 27—33. quoted in Orton, Vol. I. p. 174. Also Horne on the Study of the Sacred Scriptures, Vol. II. p. 627, &c.

with presents and submission. The night previous to their meeting, Jacob having retired from his family and droves, probably, for the purpose of devotion, it is said, (verse 24), “there wrestled *a man* with him until the breaking of the day.” But Jacob says, afterwards, (verse 30.), that he had “seen God face to face.” This was, therefore, most probably, “the Angel of the Covenant,” in the form of a man, who had appeared before to Abraham, and also to Isaac and to Jacob on several occasions; and Jacob’s wrestling with him is an emblem, of that wrestling, or striving, or importunity, which we should hold in spirit, in prayer to God; and, on Jacob’s prevailing over the Angel, his name was changed to *Israel*, that is *a prince of God*, or a prevailer by earnest prayer.

In the XXXIII^d chapter the brothers meet, not, as foes, to fight; but Jacob “bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother; and Esau ran to meet him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept.” Thus, restored to love, they parted brothers, and friends; and Jacob journied to Shechem, where “he erected an altar, and called it *El-elohe-Israel*; that is, *to God, the God of Israel*, who had thus preserved him in all his dangers, and brought him again to the place where Abraham had built his first altar in Canaan to God the Lord.

No sooner is Jacob at rest from his troubles with Laban and Esau, than we find him in fresh afflictions, and those arising from his own family. He had an only daughter, the daughter of Leah, Dinah by name, who, being about fifteen years of age, and, probably, of a light, gay disposition, went to see “the daughters of the land,” as Josephus informs us, at the time of *a feast*; and, as such places are

the resort of those who are loosely disposed, and are apt occasions for sin, she became the prey, and, perhaps, not unwillingly, of Shechem, the son of Hamor, prince of the country. Shechem, however, having done wrong, offered to repair the injury, and asked her in marriage of her father, who consulted with his sons ; and Simeon and Levi, under pretence of religion, threw them off their guard, and, while defenceless, came upon all the men of Shechem, and slew them. Let it be observed, too, that, as *passion* swayed with Shechem, so *covetousness* swayed with the people ; and they hoped, by consenting to the proposal of Jacob's sons, they should at least share in their wealth. Thus passion, revenge and covetousness were made the scourge of each other ; and two families were plunged in ruin and misery from the misconduct of a giddy girl. Such has been the fruit of many *a feast* in our days ; *a feast* thought and spoken of with so much pleasure ; the cause, generally, of so much sin and misery !

The XXXVth chapter gives an account of the removal of Jacob and his family from Shechem to Beth-el, and of the death of Deborah, the faithful nurse of Rebecca, and the deaths of Rachel and Isaac.

The XXXVIth chapter gives an account of the descendants of Esau.

This is the history of these two brothers, as far as they are concerned together, of whom it was said by God “ Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated.” (Mal. i. 2, 3. Rom. ix. 13.) And why was this ? Because Esau, as we have seen, was “ a profane person,” and despised his birth-right and the promises, while Jacob, believed God, and valued these, and “ it was counted unto him for righteousness.” (Gen.

xv. 6. Psalm cvi. 31. Rom. iv. 3. Gal. iii. 6.) *Birth* did confer privileges and honours, but not necessarily. The birth-right might be forfeited by misconduct, as it was by Cain, by Esau, by Reuben, and many others; and God's grace is free, and not to be questioned. Not that God is arbitrary, or capricious; but the Maker of all things, the Judge of all things, to whom there is *no past*, and *no future*, but to whom all is ONE ETERNAL NOW*, he disposes all things in his *wisdom* and in his *goodness*. In his sight all have sinned. Who can say, I am *righteous*, I have *deserved*? None. No not one, neither Abraham, nor Isaac, nor Jacob; but, when they sit down in the kingdom of God, it is of God's free grace. And may God so incline us to *believe*, and so to evidence our *faith* by our *works*, that we may, for Christ's sake, be accounted heirs of salvation.

* See Wogan, Vol. ii. p. 233.

SERMON X.

THE THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT.—GENESIS XXXVII—XLII.

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN.

GENESIS xxxix. 2.

And the Lord was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man.

ONE of the most interesting and beautiful parts of the Bible is the history of Jacob, called also Israel, and his twelve sons, the patriarchs, the heads of the twelve tribes. I never enter upon the history but with fresh delight.

[Of all God's multiplied mercies to me, I consider one of the greatest to have been his having given me pious parents, who knew that the Holy Scriptures alone were "able to make one wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus," (2 Tim. iii. 15. i. 5.) and who brought me to a knowledge of them while I was yet "a child." Amongst my earliest and most delightful recollections, is, that, as soon as I could read, standing against the knee, and directed by the finger of, a beloved *mother*, I read, and wept over, the history of Joseph and his brethren.]

Joseph was the son of Rachel, Jacob's beloved wife, who, having had no child for many years, first bore Joseph; and, next, in giving life to her second son, Benjamin, yielded up her own. Her sons were, therefore, at once pledges of their love, and living

monuments to her memory ; and Jacob, like a *fond* father, distinguished Joseph by “ a coat of many colours.” See the XXXVIIth chapter and the 3d verse. This was inconsiderate, exciting the *envy* of his brethren ; and, in fact, bringing much misery upon the object of his love, and on himself. Jacob had seen the ill-effects of partiality and favouritism in his own parents, Isaac and Rebecca, towards his brother Esau and himself ; and, yet, he indulges and *shews* a partiality amongst his own children. The brethren “ hated” Joseph, “ and could not speak peaceably unto him.” Joseph, too, dreamed a dream, that he and his brethren were binding sheaves in the field, and that his sheaf rose and stood upright, and those of his brethren bowed before his. This he, perhaps, imprudently, told to his brethren, who understood by it, that they were,—or at least that Joseph thought they were—one day to bow down before him. He, also, dreamed again, that the Sun and Moon and eleven stars made obeisance to him ; and this was interpreted, that his father and mother, as well as his brethren, were to bow down before him. And, one day, when the brethren were at a distance, feeding their flocks in Shechem, Jacob sent Joseph to see how they were going on ; when the sight of the coat of many colours, and the recollection of the dreams, gave a fresh impulse to their envy and hatred, and they proposed to kill him ; but Reuben interfered, and he was cast into a pit, from which he was taken, on a company of Ishmaelite merchants coming by ; and was sold, as a slave, to them ; who carried him into Egypt, and sold him again to Potiphar, captain of the guard to Pharaoh the king.

But what account is to be given to the fond father for the absence of his son ? They take a kid, and

kill it, and dip the coat in the blood, and carry this token of his affection for his darling son, thus stained, to blast his sight. He who, dressed in his brother's garments, had made use of the flesh and skins of two kids, to deceive his sightless father, is now, by the blood of a kid and his son's coat, deceived in his turn, and had rather have been blind than seen so dreadful a sight. Wicked brethren, who could so dispose of a brother! Wicked sons, who could so wound a father!!

The XXXVIIIth chapter contains an account of Judah and his family, which, however unpleasant, in several respects, is necessary to the history, as he was the head of that tribe from which the Messiah descended.

We proceed, then, to the XXXIXth chapter.

Joseph, though sold to be a slave, had still the Lord with him, and he made all that he did to prosper in his hands, and his master, seeing this, "made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand. And it came to pass, from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had in the house and in the field." What an example is here, both to masters and servants, but especially the latter. Servants are apt to complain of *masters*, when the fault is generally in *themselves*. They do not serve "with all good fidelity," and "for the Lord's sake;" and, so, the Lord is not with them. They are careless, idle and dishonest; for carelessness and idleness are dishonesty, though they should not be guilty of actual theft. If servants

were worthy of trust, trust would be placed in them, and they would be rewarded. A really tried and faithful servant is ever considered as one of the family. And, should a servant ever think with himself, that he is not regarded, and not rewarded, let him ask himself, Have I “set the Lord always before me?” Have I done service “as to the Lord, and not unto men?” Have I been careful of my master’s property, and his time; and do I conduct myself in a humble and obliging manner? If not, how can I expect my master to respect me? how can I expect the Lord to be with me, and prosper him for my sake?

While Joseph had, thus, gained the esteem and confidence of his master, he had, unhappily, found too much favour, of an unlawful kind, in the eyes of his mistress, who made advances to him; and, finding he slighted them, she even solicited him to commit sin. But gratitude to his indulgent master prevailed in his breast, as a sufficient reason against complying; but the great consideration of all was, “How can I do this great wickedness and *sin* against God?” A consideration, or reflection, which should be always in our mind, when temptation of any kind assails us, “How can I do this *great* wickedness,”—for no transgression of any commandment is *small* in the sight of Holiness—“How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” The wife of Potiphar being, thus, repulsed; and not brought to the same fear of God that the righteous servant possessed, now accused Joseph to her husband of the very sin which he had refused to commit; and Joseph was cast into prison. “But,” here, again, “the Lord was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy,

and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison. And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it. The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing that was under his hand; because the Lord was with him; and that which he did, the Lord made it to prosper."

There are many passages in Scripture against which great exception has been taken, and they have been pronounced as being *indelicate* and unfit for general reading, and especially for young persons. Of this kind are the story now mentioned, that of Noah and his sons when he was overcome of wine, the incest of Lot and his daughters, the history of Dinah and Shechem, Judah and Tamar, and many others. But there is this to be observed, that, in whatever is mentioned in Holy Scripture, however unpleasant and painful in the reading, there is nothing that can corrupt; *sin* is mentioned as *sin*,—is condemned, and forbidden; whereas, in our plays and novels, and too often in conversation, sins are palliated and excused, and, sometimes, even set in an engaging light, and held up to imitation. The language and practice of the world, and of plays and novels, is, "young people will be young people—there can be no harm in following our natural propensities." The language of the Bible is, "He hath wrought folly in Israel:" (Gen. xxxiv. 7. Deut. xxii. 21. Judges xx. 6.) "How shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren." (Gen. ix. 25.) The histories which God, by his Holy Spirit, has been pleased to give us for our instruction, it is our duty to receive and consider

with respect, that they may bring forth in us the fruits of righteousness and true holiness, to the praise of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The XLth chapter gives an account of the chief butler and chief baker of Pharaoh being cast into prison, and placed under Joseph's care; and each of them dreamed a dream which troubled him; "and Joseph said unto them, Do not interpretations belong to God?" They told their dreams; and Joseph, from God, interpreted them, that *that* of the baker signified, that he would be hanged; but the butler's, that he would be restored to his place. "But, think on me," said he, "when it shall be well with thee, and shew kindness, I pray thee, unto me; and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house: for, indeed, I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews; and, here, also, have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon."—"Yet," it is added, afterwards, "did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him." Such is, too commonly, the case with benefits conferred; such is the case with those who have received them, when they come to be in prosperity, and able to confer favours in return. There is no vice more generally condemned, and few so universally practised as *ingratitude*. We see it plainly in *others*, we are wholly blind to it in *ourselves*.

On the subject of Joseph's being sold as a slave, and, afterwards, being thrown into prison, when he was innocent, and detained there, at the will of his master, without any trial,—we may observe upon the great blessing of living under a regular and free government, such as *ours*. Such a thing could not happen in this country. Our laws will not allow of *a slave*. If *a slave* be brought hither from another

country, his very setting his foot upon our land makes him a FREE-MAN. And, if any one be cast into prison, upon being accused of a crime, he can demand his trial before a jury of twelve of his equals. These are some of the blessed fruits of the Gospel of Christ.

The interpretation of the two dreams had, in two years, effected nothing for Joseph; and, now, God sends two dreams to the king, as we read in the XL1st chapter, which, neither “all the magicians of Egypt,” nor “all the wise men thereof,” could interpret. And, now that Joseph’s communion with God is wanted in Pharaoh’s court, the chief butler be-thinks himself, and acknowledges his fault in having neglected him; and Joseph, who might, otherwise, have remained in his dungeon, is sent for in a hurry to court. The two dreams are told and interpreted, and Joseph is immediately promoted to be second only to Pharaoh in the kingdom.

From the instances which have been, now, mentioned, of the dreams of Joseph, of the chief butler and baker, and of Pharaoh, and others mentioned in other parts of the Bible, which were undoubtedly sent by God to foreshew what was to happen to those to whom they were sent, many persons suppose that *all*, or, at least, *many*, dreams, and even to this time, are *prophetic*, and are anxious to find out the meaning of them; and certain foolish and wicked persons, taking advantage of this spirit of curiosity, or of inquiry into the future, set themselves up as interpreters of dreams, forgetting, or disregarding, what Joseph said, “Do not interpretations belong to God?” Even during the period in which God occasionally vouchsafed to send a prophetic dream, the Israelites were expressly warned, (Deut. xiii. 1—5.) not to hearken to a dreamer of dreams, even though

what he foretold should come to pass, and that such a dreamer was to be put to death. In respect to *ourselves* and *these times*, if dreams were, in the time in which God especially guided the Israelites, a mean by which he foretold what was to come, and *prophecy* has now ceased, have not *prophetic dreams* ceased too? Should we expect any more that God will foreshew future events to us in our *sleep*, than he does (whatever the means of conveying those impressions were before) while any one is awake? But, though God's extraordinary communications to man have ceased, we know that, still, he suggests good thoughts to us by his Holy Spirit, and it is from the *nature* and *tendency* of them, that we determine whether they come from God, or are the suggestions of the evil-one. Similar to this may be the nature of our sleeping thoughts and visions. Whatever is *good* in them we may attribute to Him "from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed *," and whatever is *evil*, is from the evil-one and his agents. Our waking thoughts and pursuits have great effect upon our sleeping thoughts; and he who wishes for pleasant and devout dreams must regulate his thoughts and actions accordingly: the body acts upon the spirit; and the body, clogged by intemperance and disease, will have troubled and wicked dreams. The advice of Solomon upon this subject, (Eccles. v. 7.) is the best that can be given, "In the multitude of dreams are divers vanities: but fear thou God."

The object of God, in sending these two dreams to Pharaoh, was to inform him that there would be seven years of unusual plenty of cattle and corn, and

* First Collect in the Communion.

after that, seven years of famine, in which all the abundance of the former years should be swallowed up. To provide against this predicted famine, Pharaoh appointed Joseph to be ruler, under him, of all the land, and to lay up stores against the years of famine, which he, accordingly, did. But the famine was not confined to Egypt. It extended far and wide, and people from all countries came to purchase corn in Egypt; and Joseph superintended the distribution in person; and, amongst the purchasers, who should he see *bowing down before him*, but the very ten brethren who had said, "Behold, this dreamer cometh. Come, now, therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit; and we will say, some evil beast hath devoured him, and we will see what will become of his dreams;" (xxxvii. 19, 20.) and who had actually sold him as a slave to some Ishmaelitish merchants!—Joseph knew them. In the number and the countenances, and persons, he could not mistake. But they knew not him. When they sold him, he was seventeen; and twenty-two years, and much care and sorrow, had changed the bloom of youth into the graver cast of manhood. The garments of an Egyptian and a governor were such as they had never seen him in; and who could ever imagine, that the youth sold as a slave was the present viceroy of Egypt?

Here are the *ten brethren*, indeed: but where is *Benjamin*, the son of his own mother, to give life to whom she had lost her own? How, if they have sold him, too, as a slave,—or, worse, slain him, and cast him into a pit, and said that a wild beast had devoured him? and, now, under the pretence of buying corn,—or at the same time that they really

come for corn for their necessity—may have heard of the Hebrew slave who has been exalted by Pharaoh, and are come to spy out the situation of the land and of the governor? Joseph, therefore, spake roughly unto them, and accused them of being *spies*, “And they said, thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and, behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and *one*—is not,”—is not alive—is dead. Surely, at this time, *conscience* began to work, if it had never troubled them before! “And Joseph said unto them, That is it that I spake unto you, saying, Ye are spies. Hereby ye shall be proved; By the life of Pharaoh,” or, As surely as Pharaoh lives, “ye shall not go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither. Send *one* of you, and let him fetch your brother; and ye shall be kept in prison, that your words may be proved, whether there be any truth in you: or else, by the life of Pharaoh, surely ye are spies. And he put them all together into ward three days.”

And, now, behold the righteous judgments of God. They who had cast Joseph into the pit, are “gathered together as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and are shut up in the prison.” (Isaiah xxiv. 22.) What an opportunity was here, had Joseph been of a revengeful disposition! But the *righteous* are ever *merciful*. (Psalm xxxvii. 26.) Three days imprisonment gave them all an opportunity for self-recollection; and, perhaps, Joseph, by means of the keeper, or some one else, had them more closely questioned as to the truth of Benjamin being alive, and saw more reason to believe them, than at first, “for Joseph said unto them, the third day, This do, and live; for I fear God: If ye be true men, let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your

prison ; go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses : but bring your youngest brother unto me ; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die." And, now, at length, *conscience*, if it had never spoken before, speaks out aloud, "And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us, and we would not hear ; *therefore* is this distress come upon us."

It seems, from these words, as if they had been conversing before upon the subject, and had had a difference of opinion, whether this trouble was a judgment upon them for their unnatural behaviour towards their brother. Each one does *not* think it a judgment upon him for some particular, but different, sin ; Reuben does *not* say, "I am verily guilty concerning my *father*, in that I trespassed against him : " (Gen. xlix. 3, 4. 1 Chron. v. 1.) Simeon and Levi do *not* say, "We are verily guilty concerning the Shechemites ;" nor does Judah say, "I am verily guilty in the matter of Tamar : " but "they said one to another, *We* are *verily* guilty concerning our *brother*." All ten of them were concerned together in that inhuman deed ; and, now, they get into trouble concerning a *brother* whom they have *not* injured. The requisition of *Benjamin*, therefore, they conclude to be a judgment on them for that which they did against *Joseph*.

Reuben, however, consoles himself with this reflection, "Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child ; and ye would not hear ? therefore, behold, also, his blood is required." But, though Reuben had said this, still he was what we term *an accessory after the fact*. Why did he not go after Joseph, at the time, or afterwards, to bring him

back? Why did he join in the cruel imposition on his father?

“And they knew not that Joseph understood them; for he spake unto them by an interpreter. And he turned himself about from them, and wept; and returned to them again, and communed with them, and took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes.” Simeon, who we have seen was of a savage, cruel disposition, had, perhaps, been forward in the proceedings against Joseph; and he might fear him in his conduct towards his brethren on their return, and towards Jacob and Benjamin at home, that he selected him as the hostage. And, now has Simeon to remain in the prison while the brethren take their journey of one hundred and ninety miles, with their laden asses, back into Canaan to their father, and while their corn is consumed, and they can prevail upon him to give up Benjamin and return into Egypt.

“Then Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn, and to restore every man’s money into his sack, and to give them provisions for the way.” The pious son and brother would not take money for supplying his father and brethren with corn in a famine; but the money thus returned caused them much perplexity, “and they were afraid, saying one to another, What is this that God hath done unto us?” They thought that God had now taken them in hand to punish them; and every event, adverse or prosperous, was made an occasion of alarm.

And, now, how shall they impart these matters to their father? They, who, before, told him a lie without scruple, now fear to tell him the truth. And, now, a *suspicion*, if not an *accusation*, which had lain still in Jacob’s mind, at length breaks out: “Me

have ye bereaved : Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away. All these things are against me.”—“ And he said, my son shall not go down with you, for his brother,” that is his own brother Joseph, “ is dead, and he is left alone,” that is of my beloved Rachel’s children : and, “ if mischief befall him by the way in which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.”

In this state of affliction must we leave the venerable patriarch till another sabbath shall give us an opportunity to conclude his history ; and I will, now, make two short observations, one on the conduct of the brethren, as we have seen it, towards their brother Joseph ; the other upon the present state of the patriarch ; and will close my discourse with a short view of Joseph as a type of Christ.

Joseph had dreamed a dream which he considered remarkable, and told it to his brethren. They put their own interpretation upon it, “ Shalt thou indeed have dominion over us ?” (xxxvii. 8.) They were, therefore, in some measure, accustomed to dreams, and considered them as *prophetic*. But, if this came from God, and it was his will that Joseph should “ indeed have dominion over them,” and that “ the elder should serve the younger,” as was the case with their father and his brother, what madness and impiety it was to oppose it ! and still more so, to think of preventing it by killing him ! Had they attempted it, God would no doubt have interposed, either by some second cause, or by miracle. But they determined to sell him as a slave, and that was the very step which led to the fulfilment of the prophetic dream. Thus God ever bringeth to nought the counsels of the ungodly ; they “ are sunk down

in the pit that they made: in the same net which they hid privily is their foot taken. The Lord is known to execute judgment: the ungodly is trapped in the work of his own hands." (Psalm ix. 15, 16.) "There are many devices in a man's heart;" says Solomon, "nevertheless, the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand." (Prov. xix. 21.)

In respect to Jacob, who, likewise, understood the import of the dream, was it not his duty to attend to, and forward, the will of God? but he "rebuked him." (xxxvii. 10.) Jacob had had frequent communion with God; he himself had experienced that God preferred him to the first-born, and was anxious to secure the blessing. But that was for his interest and advancement above his elder brother; this touched his pride that he was to bow down before his son. When it was "Let people serve *thee*, and nations bow down to *thee*: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee:" (xxvii. 29.) then he had no objection. But, when Joseph, even him whom "he loved more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age," dreams that "the sun, and the moon, and the eleven stars, made obeisance to him:" then it is "What is this that thou hast dreamed? Shall I, and thy mother, and thy brethren, indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?" Alas! what a creature of interest and pride is man! If Jacob had any doubts, why did he not "inquire of the Lord," (xxv. 22.) as Rebecca had done, when she was in perplexity? Might not, then, God permit this deceit to be passed upon Jacob, and this long sorrow and ignorance of Joseph's state, for his neglect to forward the counsels of the Most High?

How diligent, then, ought we to be in studying to

learn the will of God, and especially in respect to his blessed Son. Though it is not, any where in the New Testament, said expressly, that Joseph was a type of Christ, yet expositors seem generally to agree that he was so. “He was *innocent*; he was *persecuted*; he was *exalted*.” And, indeed, “when St. Stephen pleaded before the Jews,” (Acts vii. 9—13.) he pointed this story of Joseph against them in such words, that they saw their own wickedness in that of Joseph’s brethren, and fell into a rage; gnashing upon him with their teeth for bringing their wickedness home to them in such plain terms. For such as Joseph had been, such was Jesus Christ, whom they had lately crucified: they had done unto him as their forefathers had done to the Patriarch Joseph; whose character, in every part of it, bears the strongest testimony to the history of Jesus Christ; so strong, that the Jews, who heard it, were not able to bear it. For, saith St. Stephen, *the Patriarchs* (his own brethren), *moved with envy* (as the High Priests were afterwards,) *sold* Joseph (as Judas sold our Saviour) into *Egypt*; (delivering him to the *Gentiles* to be evil entreated and punished as a malefactor and a slave.) The Patriarch *Judah* was the *seller* of Joseph; and his name-sake, *Judas*, sold Jesus Christ. We see Joseph in a prison between two malefactors, and promising life to one of them, as Christ did to one of those who suffered with him. We see him again, cast into a pit; there to be dead and forgotten; but brought alive out of it. His coat was dipped in blood; as Christ wore a purple robe, and appeared (as the prophet had foretold) in dyed garments, stained with the blood of his sufferings.

“In Joseph’s exaltation, his brethren, who had persecuted him, fell down before him to the ground;

and so to Jesus Christ, once mocked and persecuted by his brethren, every knee shall bow. Joseph was made a Saviour to his father and all his house, and fed them with bread according to their families, in a time of famine ; as Jesus Christ is the true bread to Jew and Gentile, to whom all the tribes of the earth must come to be nourished unto life eternal*.”

The words of St. Paul to the Philippians (ii. 1—11.) come to my mind, and I know not that I can conclude with any better : “ If there be, therefore, any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory : but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man, also, on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was, also, in Christ Jesus ; who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God ; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men ; and, being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself ; and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore, God, also, hath highly exalted him, and given him a name, which is above every name ; that, at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess, that JESUS CHRIST IS LORD, TO THE GLORY OF GOD THE FATHER.” Amen.

* Jones's Book of Nature. Part II. § XIV.

SERMON XI.

THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT—GENESIS XLIII—L.

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN, AND JACOB.

GENESIS xlv. 8.

So, now, it was not you that sent me hither, but GOD : and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and Lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.

AT the close of the XLIIId chapter, on Sunday last, we left Jacob and his sons, on their return out of Egypt, who had told him that the governor had detained Simeon, as a hostage, till they went back with Benjamin. And Jacob said, “My son shall *not* go down with you ; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone : and, if mischief befall him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.”

But what will not hunger and famine effect ! The pains arising from hunger and thirst are two of the main springs by which God, in his wisdom, keeps the world in action. If *no* pain arose from these, who would labour for food and drink ? Would men *labour* from a sense of *duty* to preserve life ? No : *sloth* would prevail generally, and the world would sink into decay. When “Esau came from the field and was faint,” and asked Jacob for some of his food and Jacob said, “Sell me this day thy birth-right,”—

“Esau said, Behold I am at the point to die; and what profit shall my birth-right do me?” (xxv. 29—32.) And, now, chapter xliii. 11. Jacob, pressed by famine, and intreated by Judah, says, “If it must be so, now, do this:” “and God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your brother, and Benjamin. If I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved.”

It is well worthy of remark, too, that, as the sons of Jacob had found “every man his bundle of money in his sack,” Jacob, now, orders them to take a present of such things as they have, “and take double money in your hand: and the money that was brought again in the mouth of your sacks carry it again in your hand; peradventure it was an oversight.” Here is “an example of the strictest honesty.” Jacob “sends his sons with the money again. He does not boast of the bargain, is not glad of the mistake in his favour, but is willing to make restitution; he would not take advantage of the hurry of selling the corn, to escape without paying: *a mistake is no payment.* Let us learn, then, to restore what comes to us by the mistakes of our brethren, and in every instance deal, not only honestly, but honourably, for God sees it. To take advantage of the ignorance of our brethren, or to keep what does not by right belong to us, though we did not come by it by fraud, are each contrary to strict honesty, and to the rule of *doing to others as we would have them do to us**.”

And, now, a second time, we see the brethren before Joseph, who, when he saw Benjamin, ordered that they should be brought to his own house to dinner. “And the men were afraid because they

* Orton's Exposition, vol. i. p. 238.

were brought into Joseph's house, and they said, Because of the money that was returned in our sacks at the first time, are we brought in; that he may seek occasion against us, and fall upon us, and take us for bondmen, and our asses." An excellent commentator observes upon this passage, "From the surprize and terror, which seized these brethren upon this occasion, we may observe the very malignant nature of every great and mortal sin; that it not only adds weight to our afflictions, but embitters every blessing; it raises a suspicion against the very goodness and mercies of God; fills the heart with jealous fears, and misgiving apprehensions, concerning our spiritual state and condition. Joseph intends his brethren a special favour, even the honour of dining with him; but their guilty conscience interprets it all as a design to *fall upon* and enslave them. How ought we then to fly from sin, especially every wilful and deadly sin, that leaves so lasting a sting behind; that, even after repentance, restitution and confession will not give way to comfort, but throws a damp on our courage, and blasts our hopes! And, as the lasting remembrance of any flagrant and notorious crime weakens our confidence towards God, even while we repent, so it often makes the death of a sincere penitent to have many times more of fear than hope; more pain than joy and comfort*."

"And, when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which was in their hand into the house, and bowed themselves unto the earth:" again doing homage to him, according to his dream, in the name of the whole family. "And he asked them of their welfare, and said, Is your father well? the old man of whom ye spake, is he yet alive? And they answered,

* Wogan, Vol. II. p. 203.

Thy servant our father is in good health, he is yet alive: And they bowed their heads, and made obeisance. And he lift up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son," whom he had not seen of upwards of twenty-two years, and who was but four years old when he was sold away from his father's house, "and said, Is this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me? And he said, God be gracious unto thee, my son. And Joseph made haste; for his bowels did yearn upon his brother: and he sought where to weep; and he entered into his chamber, and wept there." He soon, however, returned, "And they sat before him, the first-born according to his birth-right, and the youngest according to his youth: and the men marvelled one at another." And, indeed, it would seem wonderful, that a stranger, a great man, in a distant country, should so well know their respective ages. But the whole affair was marvellous! and, yet, it never seems once to have occurred to them, that the lord before whom they bowed was he whom they had sold to the Ishmaelite merchants travelling into Egypt. And Joseph "took and sent messes unto them from before him: but Benjamin's mess was five times so much as any of theirs. And they drunk and were merry with him."

Whether this was done with a view to see if there was any envy still lurking in the hearts of his brethren, or whether it was a mere customary mark of respect, or affection, to a particular guest, or, whether, on doing this, Joseph observed some signs of dissatisfaction and envy in his brethren towards Benjamin,—or whether *all*, or *none*, of these was the case,—Joseph resolved to try his brethren farther; and, as we are informed, in the XLIVth chapter, ordered his steward again to put every man's money

into his sack, and his silver cup into Benjamin's ; and, when they were got out of the city, he sent after them, accusing them of having *stolen* his cup. They denied the charge, saying " With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, both let him die, and we, also, will be my lord's bondmen." The search was made, and " the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. Then they rent their clothes, and laded every man his ass, and returned to the city. And Judah and his brethren came to Joseph's house ; for he was yet there ; and they fell before him on the ground." Alas ! what " anguish of soul" is now to the,—in this instance,—*guiltless* brethren of Joseph ; and it has been thought a wanton cruelty in him to have brought his brethren into such a strait. But let us well consider the character of Joseph, his merciful and tender disposition, and we may be well assured, that he did nothing, but what he thought was right and necessary for the general welfare of the family. It is the nature of *medicine*, for the most part, to *disorder* before it *cures* ; the surgeon, in probing an old and deep wound, cannot do it without giving pain ; and we do not accuse him, or the physician, of a want of feeling in the sufferings their patients undergo : no, it is the necessary course of humanity.

" And Joseph said unto them, What is this that ye have done ? Wot ye not, that such a man as I can certainly *divine* ?" And the steward had said, before, respecting the cup, " Is not this it in which my lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he *divineth* ?" It has been supposed, from the words *divine* and *divineth*, that there was some mysterious, or miraculous, powers in this cup, by which Joseph could *divine*, or make out things in a miraculous way : or, at least, that he wished his brethren to think that it was so. And we have heard of cups to which strange

miraculous powers have been attributed; such as, that, if poison was poured into them, they would break. But all this is, probably, falsehood. The margin of our Bibles, instead of *divineth*, reads *maketh trial*; and a learned Jewish rabbi explains the passage, “Should you not have considered, that my lord lets this cup go freely about his house, to try the honesty of those that eat and drink with him? And now he has detected you by it; that, after all your professions of being true men, you are quite otherwise: and have done foolishly in stealing a thing of this nature, which, being in continual use, was soon missed.” This is an easy sense of the words, and is generally approved*.

Judah, (who had undertaken for Benjamin to Jacob, to bring him back safe, and who was the one, likewise, who had proposed to the brethren the selling Joseph, instead of leaving him to perish in the pit,) now made a most moving speech to Joseph, which I lament that the time will not allow me to read to you; it is contained from the 16th to the end of the 34th verse. It produced, however, the desired effect.

Chapter XLV. “Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren. And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard. And Joseph said unto his brethren,—I am JOSEPH: Doth my father yet live?” What a discovery was this! The ruler of all the land of Egypt, the brother whom they, in envy, had sold to be a slave! No wonder “his brethren could not answer him;” and “were troubled at his presence!” To what a train

* See Reading's Sermons, vol. ii. p. 8.

of ideas had he given rise! How must their consciences have accused them! What punishment must they think they deserve! And he has *power* to inflict whatever he may chuse. But *revenge* has no place in the breast of Joseph. He “said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you: and they came near. And he said, I am JOSEPH your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt.” This he says, not by way of reproach, but to convince them that he was *the same*; for he proceeded, “Now, therefore, be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve life. For these two years hath the famine been in the land; and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So, now, it was not *you* that sent me hither, but GOD: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.”

This reply of Joseph involves in it the very difficult question, How far the acts of wicked men are to be attributed to God, who is alone the giver and supporter of life, and in whose hands are the hearts of all men. Had the *brethren* made this speech, it had been mockery of Joseph, and insult to God; like the plea of Adam, “the woman whom *thou* gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.” (Gen. iii. 12.) But, in Joseph, it was piety to God, and the greatest kindness and affection to his brethren; as it was, of all considerations, the best calculated to still their troubled spirits. The envy of the brethren, and the thought and act, first, of killing him, and, then, of selling him as a slave, were the

suggestions of the evil one and the fruits of their own wicked hearts. God *permitted* it, and *over-ruled* it to wise and gracious purposes. Whatever is *evil* is of the *devil*, whatever is good of God. When Pilate said unto Jesus, “Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? Jesus answered, thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from ABOVE: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the *greater sin*.” (John xix. 10, 11.) A consciousness, then, of all power being given by God, should make us careful to use it only in conformity to his will, and to his honour and glory.

Joseph, at length, convinced his brethren, and tranquillized their minds, and dismissed them to his father with provisions, and raiment, and presents, and carriages, and with this solemn piece of advice, “See that ye fall not out by the way.” Advice necessary to all brethren—and we *all* are *brethren*,—as we proceed together in the journey of life.

When the sons of Jacob told their father, “Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt.”—“Jacob’s heart fainted, for he believed them not.” The news came so suddenly upon him, and was so good, that he feared it might not be true. But, “when he saw the waggons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived. And Israel said, It is enough: Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die.”

The XLVIth chapter informs us, that “Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beer-sheba;” where Abraham had built an altar, and offered sacrifice, and Isaac had done the same, and there he, also, now, “offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac. And God spake unto Israel in

the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob : and he said, Here am I. And he said, I am God, the God of thy father. Fear not to go down into Egypt ; for I will there make of thee a great nation. I will go down with thee into Egypt ; and I will, also, surely bring thee up again : and Joseph shall put his hand upon," and close " thine eyes."

An account is then given of the journey of Jacob and his family into Egypt, with the names of his children, grand-children, and great-grand-children, amounting, as we are told, (verse 26,) to " three score and six," which, with Jacob, and Joseph, and his two sons, make up " three score and ten," mentioned in the 27th verse.

But a difficulty is started, that St. Stephen, in his speech before the high priest and synagogue, (Acts vii. 14), says, that Joseph " called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, three score and fifteen souls." In which it is supposed that there is a contradiction between the seventy souls mentioned by Moses, and the seventy-five mentioned by St. Stephen. But they speak of different computations. Moses speaks of Jacob and his family when he was arrived in Egypt. Stephen speaks of those whom Joseph sent for, who were the eleven brethren and a daughter and their children and grand-children, making the sixty-six, as before mentioned by Moses ; and *nine* wives of the brethren, Judah's wife being dead, and Simeon's also, as we may collect from his youngest son, Shaul, being by a Canaanitess. (xlvi. 10 *.)

Joseph, though ruler of all Egypt, and with all the

* See Horne's Introduction to the Study of the Sacred Scriptures, vol. i. p. 597.

places at court, and all the land at his disposal, was too wise, and too much consulted the real happiness of his father and his brethren, to take them from the mode of life to which they had been accustomed, and to make them at once rich and great; but gave them what was desirable in their own way, and placed them in the land of Goshen, a land of desirable pasture for flocks and herds. There Joseph met Israel his father “and presented himself unto him: and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while. And Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive.”

Joseph informed Pharaoh of the arrival of his father and family, and requested leave for them to dwell in Goshen, at a distance from court, because, as it is said, (verse 34,) “every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians;” because they killed those cattle which the Egyptians held sacred and worshipped. But, in the XLVIIth chapter, (verse 6.) when some of Joseph’s brethren are presented to Pharaoh, he says, “if thou knowest any man of activity amongst them, then make them rulers over my cattle.” So that we find, nevertheless, that Pharaoh had his cattle; these were kept, probably, for their milk and their wool.

This chapter, beginning at the 13th verse, gives an account of the severity of the famine, and the manner in which Joseph relieved the people; and in which he acted a wise and kind part. He was the minister of Pharaoh, and could not give the corn away; it was reasonable that the crown should have some advantage; only a fifth part was laid up by the king’s orders; particular persons might store great quantities for themselves: if they used it too freely, or sold it to strangers for an extravagant

price, they only were to blame; they knew how long the famine was to last, and were fairly forewarned. It was great kindness to take their cattle, or they would have perished. Though he had their lands, he gave them these again, only laying on them a tax, or rent, of one fifth *.

In the XLVIIIth chapter, we have an account of Jacob being sick, and Joseph going to visit him, and taking his two sons with him, Manasseh and Ephraim, and Jacob blessing them; but, as, in the case of Esau and himself, the younger was preferred before the elder. At the 16th verse, Jacob says, “The *Angel* which *redeemed me* from all evil, bless the lads.” But Jacob had, before, said to Pharaoh, in his interview with him, (xlvii. 9.) “few and evil have the days of the years of my life been:” so that this can only mean, that the Angel had, in the end, brought him *through* his troubles in this life, and, especially, that he had *redeemed* him from *all evil*, or the power of *the evil one*, in the life to come, of which he maintained an assured hope and trust.

In the XLIXth chapter, we have a most solemn and interesting scene presented to us: “Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days. Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob: and hearken unto Israel your father.” The eldest three, however, instead of a blessing, hear a curse pronounced by their aged and dying father, Reuben for his incest, and Simeon and Levi for their treachery and cruelty in the matter of the Shechemites: “I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.” And, accordingly, the posterity of

* See Orton, Vol. I. p. 257.

Simeon never had any distinct inheritance to themselves, but only a portion in the midst of the tribe of Judah, as we read, Joshua xix. 1, 2*.

The *Levites*, it is well known, had no inheritance allotted them, but were dispersed among all the other tribes, that they might perform the religious offices among them, to which they were dedicated. This, indeed, proved *no curse* to them, but a blessing; but then, the curse was taken off upon the eminent service which the Levites performed on the setting up of the *golden calf*. (Exod. xxxii. 26.) For, when Moses, upon that occasion, proclaimed, that all who were on the Lord's side should separate themselves, the Levites assembled and appeared before him; and, at his command, they armed, and fell upon the idolaters, and slew three thousand of them. By which act they are said to have consecrated themselves to the Lord, and to have obtained his blessing. And Moses, accordingly, in his last words, (Deut. xxxiii. 9,) commends them to the favour of God, saying, "They have observed thy word, and kept thy covenant †."

* "We find them assisting one another to enlarge their border, Judges i. 3, 17, and their lot proving too straight for them, they acquired possessions in after-times wherever they could, at any distance from their brethren. Thus we read, 1 Chron. iv. 39, that five hundred of this tribe went to Mount Seir, and settled there. And it is a constant Hebrew tradition, as P. Fagius observes, that a great many of this tribe, wanting a livelihood, applied themselves to be school-masters in all the other tribes of Israel; where few followed this employment but Simeonites: which fully verifies the Patriarch's prediction, *I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.*" —Reading, Vol. I. p. 316.

† Which could not be said of the Simeonites; for Zimri, a prince of that tribe, was a ringleader of his people into the Moabitish idolatry, mentioned Numb. xxv., whom Phineas, of the tribe of

TO JUDAH is given THE PROMISE: “Thy father’s children shall bow down before thee.”—“The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until SHILOH come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.”

The word *Shiloh* is rendered by some, *the sent*, or the *Messiah*, the *Christ*. By another it is translated *quiet* and *prosperous*, the *prosperous* author of salvation and *rest*, or the *Prince of Peace*. The accomplishment of this prediction is evident. The offspring of Judah preserved their distinct existence as a tribe, together with a power of government and judging of causes, till Jesus came in the flesh. The tribe of Judah were most numerous when they came out of Egypt; they led the way in the wilderness. Othniel, the first of the judges, was of this tribe. (Judges iii. 9.) And long had the family of David, who were of this tribe, the royal power. Even under the Chaldeans and Persians, Jehoiakim, Zerubabel and Nehemiah, all of this tribe, held a superiority. For about 160 years before Christ, the Maccabean priests and the family of Herod, ruled over the Jews, both of which were in a manner incorporated with the tribe of Judah; and, besides, the sanhedrim of Jewish elders had much power in their hands. Not long after our Saviour’s incarnation, Judea was reduced to a Roman province*.

The time will not allow me to enter farther into the particulars of Jacob’s blessing. When he had concluded it, “he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people, bury me with

Levi, slew in his zeal for the Lord; and, therefore, Moses, in his last benediction, says nothing of the Simeonites, but leaves them under their original curse.”—Reading. Vol. I. p. 316.

* Brown’s Dict. of the Bible: Art. *Shiloh*.

my fathers, in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite." By which desire he designed to keep their minds fixed upon their future settlement in *Canaan*. "And, when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into his bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people;" to his pious ancestors in heaven.

The Lth chapter gives an account of the sons of Jacob with a large attendance of the Egyptians, carrying his body into the land of Canaan; of a renewal of friendship between Joseph and his brethren, and of the death of Joseph.

Thus, at the age of one hundred and ten years, was closed the life of one of the best and greatest men that ever lived. Torn from his father's house, at the tender age of seventeen, and sold as a slave in a distant country, he ingratiates himself with all, and is patient in adversity. Raised suddenly to the highest honours, he is, nevertheless, humble. Foretelling seven years of plenty, to be followed by a seven years of famine,—by his wisdom, he provides against the evil day, and carries his own and the surrounding nations through the trying time with sufficiency and peace. In what are, commonly, called *great* characters, we usually look for a *warrior*, for the repeller of invading armies, or the conqueror of distant nations. But it must have been a more difficult task to conduct nations through seven years of sorely-pressing famine. But, "He that is slow to anger," says Solomon, (Prov. xvi. 32.) "is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city." And, in this light, how exalted was Joseph! His temptation to sin may be called greater than that of our first parents: they fell,—he was (through God) victorious. To an ill-

disposed mind, the temptation to *revenge*, when he had his brethren in his power, was, perhaps, as great. I dwelt upon this in my last discourse: but his brethren renewed their submission and supplication after their father's death. Had the fear of hurting his father been the impediment to avenging himself on his offending brethren, *that* was now removed. Does he take advantage of this? No: "Joseph *wept* when they spake unto him."—And he "said unto them, Fear not, for am I in the place of God? But, as for you, ye thought *evil* against me; but God meant it unto *good*, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. Now, therefore, fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them."

I know of but *one* circumstance in all history, profane, or sacred, superior, or equal, to this; and that was, when the Son of God had taken upon him man's nature, and was persecuted by his brethren, sold, mocked, and nailed upon the cross,—while he hung there in the agonies of death, he exclaimed,—FATHER, FORGIVE THEM; FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO. (Luke xxiii. 34.)

And, O God, for thy blessed Son's sake, who died upon the cross to bring transgressors to thee, forgive *us*, who are now gathered together before thee, all our sins, and receive us into thy everlasting Kingdom.

SERMON XII.

THE FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT—EXODUS I—V.

MOSES, AARON, AND PHARAOH.

EXODUS iii. 9, 10.

Behold the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me : and I have, also, seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them. Come, now, therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayst bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.

IN my last Discourse, I finished considering the book of *Genesis*; and we, this day, come to the second book in the Bible, called *Exodus*, which name is from a Greek word, signifying the *going out*, or *departure*, because it gives an account of the departure of the Israelites from the land of Egypt. It gives a history of the events which took place during the period of one hundred and forty-five years, if we reckon from the death of Joseph, recorded in the last chapter of *Genesis*, to the setting up of the Tabernacle, in the last of *Exodus*; that is from the year of the world 2369, to 2514 inclusive. But, then, from the death of Joseph to the birth of Moses was sixty-three years, and Moses was forty years old when he fled into the land of Midian, and it was forty more before he returned to conduct the Israelites out of Egypt, so that by far the greater part

of the history, from the beginning of the III^d chapter, to the end of the book, is contained in about the space of *two years*.

Moses, having, in the first book, described the creation of the world, the fall of man, the destruction of a wicked people by the flood, and the preservation of Noah and his family in the ark, the multiplication of languages and dispersion of the nations, with the call of Abraham and the origin of the *Church*, now comes, in the book of *Exodus*, to describe the state and condition of the church, consisting of several families, and united in one body, or society, the head of which was JEHOVAH; on which account, the government of the Hebrews, from the time of Moses to the establishing of kings among them, has been called a *theocracy*, that is a government with *God* as the *strength*, or *head*, of it. Accordingly, the book of Exodus records the cruel persecution of the Israelites in Egypt under Pharaoh, (called by historians Pharaoh-Rameses the II^d.) the birth, exposure, and preservation of Moses; his flight into Midian, his call and mission to another Pharaoh, (called by historians Pharaoh-Amenophis the II^d.;) the miracles performed by him and his brother Aaron; the ten plagues, also, miraculously inflicted upon the Egyptians; the institution of the Passover, and the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt; their passage across the Red Sea, and the destruction of the Egyptian army; the journeyings of the Israelites in the desert, their idolatry and murmurings against God; their being fed with manna, and having water given them from the rock; the giving of the Law from Mount Sinai, and the setting up of the Tabernacle. Twenty-five passages are quoted from Exodus by our Lord and the New Testament

writers in express words ; and there are nineteen allusions by them to the sense ; so that ample testimony is borne to the authenticity of its contents. The xth chapter of the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians furnishes us with a practical improvement of many events in this book. Here is contained the covenant of the Law of Moses, distinct from the covenant made with Abraham, as is explained by St. Paul, Gal. iii. 17. CHRIST was prefigured by the *Rock* that followed Israel, and the *Manna* which fed them, and he was the *Angel* who conducted them. *Moses* was a type of CHRIST, as a Lawgiver, Mediator, Deliverer, and Intercessor, as the Head of the Church, as the Guide and Saviour of Israel. The studying of the mediation of Moses will help us greatly to understand the mediation of Christ. The deliverance of Israel from Egypt, and their journey through the wilderness, are lively figures of *our* deliverance from the bondage of sin, and of *our* journey through the wilderness of this world to the land of heavenly rest*.

In the book of Genesis, we saw the children of Israel placed in the fertile fields of Goshen, under the protection of their brother, who was governor of Egypt, and favoured by Pharaoh their king. Now, in the 1st chapter of Exodus, Joseph and his friendly Pharaoh are dead, and “there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph ;” and who “did set over them task-masters to afflict them with their burdens.” This is what would be called by ungodly persons, *one of the caprices of Fortune*. But those who know, that there “*is a God who governs the world,*” see, in every *reverse* of circum-

* See Horne's Introduction, Vol. IV. p. 10. Bickersteth, p. 28.

stances, and in every event, the hand of a wise and gracious PROVIDENCE, who, when he afflicts, does it only for the *good* of the afflicted. The case was, that the children of Israel began to forget “the God of their fathers,” and to give into the idolatry of the Egyptians, and the Egyptians began to give into worse and worse idolatries. God designs, therefore, to bring out the Israelites, and to punish the Egyptians.

And Pharaoh “said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we. Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and, so, get them up out of the land.” But, what Pharaoh calls dealing *wisely*, St. Stephen, in his speech to the Jews, (Acts vii. 19.) calls dealing *subtilly*. That is, instead of dealing *openly* and *honestly*, he had recourse to stratagem, or artifice; and the consequence was—the usual fate of subtilty—that he over-reached himself, and what he feared came to pass, “they got them up out of the land,” and—they, indeed, did not “fight against” them themselves—but, what was more dreadful, the Lord fought for them, and destroyed every one of their oppressors. But we have to take a view of many oppressions, and many judgments for them, before we come to this. Pharaoh, finding that the Israelites multiplied, notwithstanding his oppressions, and that a private order to destroy the male children was disobeyed, “charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river.”

It was at this time, that Moses was born, as we read in the II^d chapter; and his mother Jochebed not being able, from a mother’s love, to destroy her

child, or to suffer it to be destroyed by another, determines to conceal it; which she did for three months; and, then, not being able to do so any longer, and a search, probably, being set on foot, she took an ark, or basket, of rushes, and daubed it with slime, or clay, within, and with pitch without, and laid it in the flags, by the river's brink; intending, probably, only to let it be there till the search was over, and to be able to say, if she was questioned about it, that she had put the child into the river. She did not, however, think this sufficient, and she set her daughter Miriam to watch the ark. But all this had been of no avail, if the good providence of God had not been over that ark which contained the future leader of his church, as it was over the ark which contained his then whole church, in the general deluge. What Israelite dare have rescued this child, and brought it up openly? God, therefore, put it into the heart of even the daughter of Pharaoh to come that way, with her attendants, as was the custom of the country, to bathe in the river; and, seeing the ark, she sent her maid for it, "And, when she had opened it, she saw the child; and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on it, and said, This is one of the Hebrew's children. Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go, and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee? And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Go. And the maid went, and called the child's mother." And, now, the child is nursed by its own mother, under the protection of Pharaoh's daughter, and was instructed, as St. Stephen says, "in all the learning of the Egyptians." (Acts vii. 22.) He was instructed, likewise, in the history of the Hebrews, and taught to love them,

and to worship their God. For “it came to pass,” —“when Moses was grown;” that is, as St. Stephen states, (Acts vii. 23.) “when he was full forty years old,” —“he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens: and he espied an Egyptian smiting a Hebrew, one of his brethren,” —“and he slew the Egyptian and hid,” or buried, “him in the sand.” And St. Stephen adds, (verse 25,) “he supposed his brethren would have understood, how that God, by his hand, would deliver them.” From which it should seem, that God had, already, in some way, revealed to Moses his intention of making him his instrument of delivering his people. “And, when he went out the second day, behold two men of the Hebrews strove together: and he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow? And he said, Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? Intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian?” This was one of those sallies of pride and passion and revenge, which one sees, almost every day, in the world, when people will say what comes uppermost in their wicked hearts, let the consequence be what it may. Moses was really the friend of the Hebrews, and, with them, to this man, in killing the Egyptian. He was no less the friend of this man in reproving him, when, unlike a brother, and, especially, a brother in affliction, he strove with a Hebrew. But the man’s pride and anger were touched, and, so, he would say what came uppermost, be the consequence what it might. And what was the consequence? “Moses feared, and said, Surely this thing is known.” And “Pharaoh heard this thing,” and “sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh:” and, thus, was the liberation of the Israelites, and, with them, of this angry man, perhaps, deferred for forty years. How

often have we to remark how sin is its own punishment. Men will speak and act when they are in a passion, whereas they ought to say to themselves, “I will *not* speak, nor do what I feel urged to, *because* I am in a passion.” Moses fled to Midian, where he became the keeper of the flock of Jethro the priest, and he married one of his daughters, and continued there for forty years.

In the end of this time, we read, in the III^d chapter, Moses “led the flock” far into “the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb. And the Angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire, out of the midst of the bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.” This *bush* was probably, one, either planted, or preserved, by the shepherds in the plains of Midian, as a shelter from the sun and the rain, like those single bushes which we see in our own, and other, open fields, preserved for the same purpose,—at least they always remind *me* of Moses and his bush. Under one of these, the Lord, “the shepherd of Israel,” who afterwards “led Joseph like a sheep,” (Psalm lxxx. 1.) probably, took his stand, and his *glory* shone to so great a distance, and was so resplendent, that the whole bush seemed to burn with fire, and, yet, was not consumed; presenting thereby, as is commonly supposed, an emblem of his church, the Israelites, in the flame of persecution in Egypt, and yet remaining unconsumed. In the xxivth chapter and 17th verse, we are told, that “The sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel.” Moses saw, probably, only the flame of fire and not the Glorious Being from whom it proceeded, and wondered,—as well he might.—“And, Moses said,

I will, now, turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And, when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses,—Moses. And he said, Here am I.” God, then, said, “I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,”—“I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt.” “Come now, therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayst bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt. And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?” How is this, when Moses, as we have seen, forty years before, himself thought, and supposed his brethren would have understood, how that God, by his hand, would deliver them? Probably, Moses was dazzled and confounded by this bright effulgence, and felt his own insignificance. Perhaps, too, forty years’ absence from his own people, and residence among strangers, had weaned his mind from Israel, and, in some measure, from Israel’s God. We shall see, by-and-by, that, in one instance, at least, Moses had neglected the command of the God of Abraham; and God might think such a resplendent appearance as he now put on—more glorious than on any former occasion of his appearing to the patriarchs,—necessary to impress his mind. And God said, “Certainly I will be with thee.”—“And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?”

Moses, in Egypt, and, probably, too, in Midian, had been accustomed to hear of *many* Gods by different names,—for there was scarcely a created thing which was not, in some way, considered as a God;—and with these idolatries the Israelites were—perhaps, we might with truth say *deeply*—infected. “And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you:” I AM the great, eternal, self-existent being, who always AM; who always WAS, and EVER WILL BE, and to whom what is *past* and *future* to *man* is always PRESENT.

The remainder of this chapter contains the charge of God to Moses. In the IVth chapter Moses makes objections to the work upon which God set him, “Behold they will not believe me, nor hearken to my voice: for they will say, the Lord hath not appeared unto thee.” God, then, gives him the power of working three miracles before the Israelites, as a proof that he is sent by God. But, still, Moses raises an objection that he is not eloquent, till “the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses, and he appointed that his brother Aaron should go with him, as his mouth, or speaker, to his brethren and to Pharaoh. So Moses returned to Jethro, and desired leave to depart, and set off with his wife and sons.

“And it came to pass, by the way, in the inn, that the Lord met him, and sought to kill him.” On what account was this? God, when he made his covenant with Abraham, had appointed the rite of *circumcision*, as a *seal*, or confirmation, of it. (Gen. xvii. 10—14.) “Every man-child among

you shall be circumcised :”—“ he that is eight days old :”—“ and the uncircumcised man-child” “ shall be cut off from his people ; he hath broken my covenant.” And, now, here is Moses, of the seed of Abraham, and going by commission from God to his people, with one, or both, of his children uncircumcised. Therefore “ the Lord met him, and sought to kill him.” Moses has been residing apart from his brethren, and his wife, probably, being of a different stock, had been the chief hindrance to the fulfilment of this necessary rite ; and, therefore, the performance of it now was enjoined to her, and which she performed,—not with sorrow for the transgression, and a humble submission, but—in a rebellious passion. The 26th verse says, “ So he let him go.” That is the Lord let Moses depart in peace. But others render it “ So *he*,” that is Moses, “ let *her*,” that is Zipporah his wife, “ go :” sent her back to her father ; as it was not proper that she should go along with him with such a turbulent temper : and, accordingly, afterwards, (see chapter xviii. 1, &c.) when Moses and the children of Israel came to Horeb, in their journey in the wilderness, Jethro and Zipporah met him with the two sons.

I have been the more particular in this part of the history, because I conceive it to be of important application to Christians, and especially so in *this parish*. Under the Gospel, God hath appointed the rite, or sacrament, of BAPTISM, as the *seal* of his *covenant*, or token of admission into his *Church* : “ He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved ; and he that believeth not,” and, consequently, is not baptized, “ shall be damned.” (Mark xvi. 16.) These are important, are awful, words ; and I con-

ceive, that every one who disregards Baptism, or unnecessarily delays it, is guilty of a high offence against God. If infants, at eight days old, could enter into covenant with God by circumcision, are not *infants*, under the Gospel, under an equal obligation? But, then, this is not to be done lightly, or merely with a view to giving the child a *name*, and entering it in the *register*, and to procure the *service* to be read over it, if it dies; nor should it be delayed on the idle excuse of not being able to get godfathers and godmothers to answer for it; nor yet for the still more idle one, that they cannot afford to give them a dinner: but a child should be brought *early* to *baptism* in the *Church*, under a pious conviction, that it is of the first consequence to enter it into covenant with God in his Church; and that those who altogether disregard it, or delay it, are guilty of an omission highly displeasing to God.

Nor will it be admitted as an excuse, that the *wife* is of a different way of thinking to the husband, and *she* will not have it. Look at Moses and Zipporah. The *man* is the *head*, the *Patriarch*, of every family. It is *his* duty to learn what is the will of God in respect to himself and his family, and to see that it is performed.

[And, now, that we are upon the subject of *Baptism*, I will notice briefly, that I understand some of our brethren who *dissent* from us, call our rite of BAPTISM having *the devil's mark set upon the child*. I suppose that this is said in allusion to our signing the child with the sign, or mark, of the *cross*. The reason why our Church retains this ceremony is given, at some length, in the 30th *Canon* of our Church, which is printed at the end of our larger Prayer-books, and is too long for me to read to you now, so

I refer you to that ; and I will, now, only state a scriptural argument in favour of it. Those who make the objection, I suppose, call the *cross* the *devil's mark*, from “ the mark of the beast,” mentioned in the xiiiith chapter of the Book of Revelation, the 16th verse, where, according to our best interpreters the *beast* is supposed to mean the Pope of Rome, and this “ mark in their right hands, or in their foreheads,” is some mark which he sets upon them. But, if you will turn to the ixth chapter of the Book of Revelation, the 4th verse, you will find, that the children, or men, of *God* have a *seal* in their *foreheads*, as well as the followers of the beast, and that the locusts that come out of the bottomless pit are commanded not to hurt any, “ but only those men which have *not* the seal of God in their foreheads.” Now I do *not* say, that this *seal* is the *cross* used in baptism, nor that it is the cross at all. But we see that the sons of God are marked in the forehead with a seal ; and, if, as Christ died upon *the cross* for our sins, and to bring us to God, I can see no harm, after the child is baptized, in signing it with *the cross*, “ in token that, hereafter, it shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of CHRIST *crucified*, and will manfully fight under his banner against sin, the world, and the devil, and to continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto his life's end.” But, let these solemn words be a warning to all who have been baptized and received this sign, that they do not trifle with this solemn covenant, and turn that, which should be to their everlasting *salvation*, to their everlasting *condemnation*.

I call you all to witness to this truth, that, from my first coming into the parish, I have endeavoured to make you understand the nature of the Sacrament

of Baptism, to make it a solemn and a spiritual service, and to exhort you to fulfil the solemn vows then made in your name, and, afterwards, taken upon yourselves and renewed at *confirmation*. Do you fulfil the Christian Covenant; and depend upon it you have the *seal* and the *blessing* of God.

But, to return to our subject,—]

At the 27th verse of this IVth chapter begins the account of God's commission to Aaron, of his going to meet Moses, their going together to the children of Israel, Aaron opening the commission, Moses working the miracles, "and the people believed,"—"and bowed their heads and worshipped."

In the Vth chapter, it is said, "And, afterward, Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness. And Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." Pharaoh thought that the God of Israel was like one of his own gods, or even inferior to them; and, therefore, God will make him to know *who* and *what* he is. And Moses and Aaron said, "The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the Lord our God: lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword." This was a caution, or warning, to Pharaoh, as well as a request for themselves. An ingenious commentator supposes, that, as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob offered sacrifice to God; the last, particularly, at Beer-sheba, when he was upon his journey towards Egypt, so "it is highly probable, that their posterity in Egypt kept up the same custom, while the kings were favourable to them,

and went out yearly, and held a feast and sacrifice in the way and manner which they now petition for." But, "by the tyranny and jealousy of strange kings, they fell under grievous oppression: and, thenceforth,"—"were" "restrained from meeting together in such large assemblies, as being thought dangerous to the government, which had now given them cause of discontent, by their hard usage of them*."

Pharaoh refused to let them go, and increased their burdens, which, in the usual spirit of discontent and suffering, they laid upon Moses and Aaron, because they had interfered with Pharaoh for them; and Moses, in a want of faith, likewise, "returned unto the Lord, and said, Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil-entreated this people? Why is it that thou hast sent me? For, since I came to Pharaoh, to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people, neither hast thou delivered thy people at all." This is the conclusion of the Vth chapter, as it stands in our Bible; but it had been a better division, if the first verse of the next chapter had been joined to it: "Then the Lord said unto Moses, Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh: for with a strong hand shall he let them go, and with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land."

Here our history, for this time, comes to a conclusion; but I must not close my discourse without a word of application to ourselves.

Our blessed Lord, in his conversation with the Jews, given John viii. 56—58, (which is part of the Gospel appointed for this day,) says that "Abraham rejoiced to see his day; and he saw it, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty

* Reading's Sermons, Vol. II. p. 42.

years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I AM:" taking upon himself the awful name of the God who spoke to Moses. His *ministers*, therefore, may say unto you, with humility and reverence, as Moses said to the Israelites, "I AM hath sent me unto you." For our blessed Lord, before his ascension into heaven, said to his apostles, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world:" (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.) that is, with the *succession of ministers* to the end of the world. We come to you, then—*not* with a rod with which we work *miracles*, as Moses did,—but with the *Word of God*—with THE BIBLE—in our hands*; of the truth of which you may be as well assured, by outward and inward testimony, as the Israelites could be, from the miracles he wrought, that Moses was sent from God. With this would we lead you out from the bondage of sin and Satan to the Heavenly Canaan. In *this* is the knowledge of God and of his Christ. Jesus said "to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John viii. 31, 32.) "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." (John xiv. 6.) "Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt. xi. 28.)

* Holding up a Bible. See, also, the beginning of Sermon I.

SERMON XIII.

THE SIXTH SUNDAY IN LENT.—EXODUS VI—X.

THE PLAGUES OF EGYPT.—PHARAOH'S HEART HARDENED.

EXODUS X. 3.

How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me?

My last discourse was upon that part of the book of Exodus, beginning with the first chapter, and ending with the fifth, or, rather, with the first verse of the VIth chapter, which I, then, observed more properly belonged to the Vth. We will, now, proceed, then, with the VIth chapter, the 2d and 3d verses :

“ And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the Lord. And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God ALMIGHTY ; but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them.” That is, he had displayed his *almighty power*, but not his *unchangeableness* and *faithfulness to his promises*, which the word JEHOVAH principally signifies. He had promised many things to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob ; and, now, they shall see them accomplished, and perceive the name Jehovah was fully answered in all its meaning. This is one explanation of the passage : but it appears, from many passages in Genesis, and, particularly, from chapter xxii. verse 14., that the name JEHOVAH was known to them, though they might not understand

its full meaning. But, if we only change the pointing, or stopping, and read the passage as *a question*, it removes the difficulty, “Did not I appear unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty? and by my name Jehovah was I not known to them *?”

God, then, renews to Moses and the Israelites his promise to deliver them from the bondage of Egypt, and to bring them into the land of Canaan. A genealogy is then given of the sons of Reuben, and of Simeon, and of Levi, in order to give that of Moses and Aaron; and God repeats his order to Moses to speak unto Pharaoh. “And Moses said before the Lord, Behold, I am of *uncircumcised* lips, and how shall Pharaoh hearken unto me?” The meaning of which is, that, as *circumcision* was a mark of God’s people, *uncircumcision* was reckoned a blemish; so that any thing which had a blemish, natural, or moral, was called *uncircumcised*. Moses pleads, that he had a blemish, or defect, in his speech, and was, therefore, unable to speak in a prevailing manner †.

“And the Lord said unto Moses,” vii. 1., “See I have made thee a god to Pharaoh;” that is, I have given thee a divine power to represent God, to speak in my name, and my power shall be with thee: “and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet” to speak for thee.

“And Moses was fourscore years old,” (verse 7.), “and Aaron fourscore and three years old, when they spake unto Pharaoh.” The life of Moses may be divided into three periods of forty years each, making in all one hundred and twenty years. He was forty when he fled from Egypt, he was forty

* See Orton, Vol. I. p. 305.

† Orton, i. 306.

years in Hebron, and forty years in the wilderness ; his mission to Pharaoh, and the plagues, and the Exodus, come in between the two latter periods, and did not, probably, take more than a year.

And, now, behold these two venerable personages, the one at eighty years of age, the other more ; Moses, with his shepherd's rod, now endowed with miraculous powers, in his hand, standing before the mighty king of Egypt and his court. " And Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a *serpent*," or, as some interpret it, a *crocodile*. The crocodile is a very large four-footed animal, with a body as large, or larger than a man's, and with its tail extending from twenty-five to thirty feet and more. It abounds in the river Nile in Egypt, living both in the water and upon land, and can swallow a man whole. Of the children of the Israelites which were thrown into the river most of them were, probably, devoured by crocodiles. It is sometimes, called, also, a *dragon* ; and another Pharaoh, in later times than this, is called by the prophet Ezekiel the great dragon, (see xxxix. 3.) " Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers, which hath said, My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself." If, then, the rod of Moses was turned into a crocodile, it was, probably, to shew to Pharaoh the animal which had destroyed so many of the children of the Israelites, an emblem of Pharaoh himself, and how easily he was managed in the hand of God and of his servant Moses. The same may be said of the serpent, an emblem of *the old serpent*, or Satan, whose minister Pharaoh was. The serpent was worshipped in Egypt, and the magicians and priests could *charm*

or control them; and one of the tricks which they taught them was, to remain extended and stiff, so that they could be taken up like a rod, or staff. Thus, when Aaron had “cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and it became” what, in our translation, is called “a serpent,”—“Then Pharaoh called the wise men, and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they did, also, in like manner, with their enchantments.” These magicians were persons who had, or pretended to have, commerce with demons, or evil spirits; the apostle Paul (2 Tim. iii. 8.) calls them Jannes and Jambres, who were probably the chiefs of many more. “They cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents.” God suffered them to do so, either in reality, or by some deception, that Pharaoh’s heart being hardened, he might make his plagues wonderful, and that Moses might triumph over them at last. “But Aaron’s rod,” the serpent, or whatever it was, into which his rod was turned, “swallowed up their rods;” to shew that the power, whereby Moses and Aaron wrought their miracles, was far above that, whereby the magicians had wrought theirs, and was, also, an emblem of their power being destroyed. Bishop Hall, in his Contemplation upon this miracle, says, “Pharaoh was now, from a staff of protection and sustentation to God’s people, turned to a serpent that stung them to death: God shews himself in this real emblem; doing that suddenly before him, which Satan had wrought to him by leisure; and, now, when he crawls, and winds, and hisses, threatening peril to Israel, he shews him how, in an instant, he can turn him into a senseless stick, and make him, if not useful, yet fearless *.”

* Works, by Pratt, Vol. I. p. 71.

“ And he hardened Pharaoh’s heart, that he hearkened not unto them ; as the Lord had said.” (see chapter iv. 21.) On the expression, “ the Lord hardened Pharaoh’s heart,” I will speak at the end of my discourse. I proceed, then, to treat of the *ten Plagues* which God inflicted upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians by the hands of Moses and Aaron ; which we shall find were, not only *plagues*, sent to distress and annoy them ; but were, likewise, levelled against their peculiar sins and idolatries ; at once to punish them, and to shew how vain they were against the God of Israel ; and, if possible, to wean them from them, and to warn the Israelites. God expressly says (Exod. xii. 12.) “ Against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment.”

I. *In the VIIth chapter, from the 14th verse to the 25th, the end of the chapter, is an account of the turning the *water* of the river and the lakes and ponds into *blood*, which killed all the fish, and the land stank with the smell of the putrid fish. The Egyptians held the river Nile to be a god, the great cause of the fertility of their land, and held water in general to be sacred. Into this the male children of the Israelites had been cast ; and, so, it had been polluted with *blood*, or, what is the same thing, with murder, with *life*. (Gen. ix. 4.) And, now, behold, the rivers and the ponds and the pools are all *blood*. The heat of the climate of Egypt made bathing, not only desirable for comfort, but necessary for cleanliness and health. The priests were obliged, too, to wash themselves frequently, “ making clean the outside of the cup and of the platter,” (Matt. xxiii. 25.)

* In the following remarks upon the Plagues, use has been made of *Bryant’s* “ Observations upon the Plagues of Egypt.”

though their worship consisted of all kinds of uncleanness; and, now, they cannot wash for blood, which they held in the utmost abhorrence. Even fish were considered by them as *deities*, and these are now *dead*, and a nuisance in the land. The magicians too attempted this miracle, and, either, by God's permission, really did so, or seemed to do it; but, if they did it, it only *added* to the plague. And this continued for seven days, the Egyptians obtaining only a small portion of water for their necessity, by digging round about the river, and getting what filtered through.

II. Most animals belonging to the water were held sacred and emblematic in Egypt, and the *frog* was an emblem of their priests and magicians; and it is remarkable that, in some ancient engravings, there is a representation of a frog sitting upon a water-lily, and, also, of a newly-born infant in the same manner. In the VIIIth chapter, from the 1st to the end of the 14th verse, an account is given of the plague of frogs. The Nile, their sacred river, in which they bathed and purified themselves, and which had received such a multitude of the infants of the Israelites, now sent forth frogs in amazing abundance. The blood was confined to the rivers, the ponds, and pools, and the water-vessels; but the *frogs* came into their houses, upon their beds, and into their very ovens and kneading-troughs. The magicians again attempted the same, and, if they succeeded, increased the plague. Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and desired them to intreat the Lord to remove them, and promised to let the Israelites go. But, no sooner were the frogs dead, than Pharaoh hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them.

III. From the 15th, to the end of the 19th verse, is an account of the third plague, the *lice*. The Egyptians had a particular abhorrence of this animal, and the priests were so nice in respect to it, that, they kept their heads and their bodies constantly shaved, and did not wear any woollen garments, but only linen, when they officiated in their temples. And, now, behold, the whole *dust* of the land is become *lice* infesting man and beast. The magicians had before appeared to produce what Moses did; but imposture and reality, now, alike failed them, and they were obliged to confess, “*This* is the finger of God,” the God of the Israelites, a God superior to the gods of Egypt. But, still, “Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them.”

IV. From the 20th verse, to the end of the 32nd, the end of the chapter, we have an account of the fourth plague, which was swarms of *flies*. The lxxviiiith Psalm and 45th verse, in our Bible translation, says “divers sorts of flies,” —“which devoured them.” And it is supposed that these were hornets, wasps, gnats, and all sorts of stinging and annoying flies, which stung many to death, and then eat them up. [I have heard, in this country, of a swarm of wasps devouring the whole carcase of an ox in an evening. But, in Egypt and those hot countries, they must have been larger, and more vigorous and venomous.] We hear (Deut. vii. 20, and Joshua xxiv. 12.) of the *hornet* driving out the Canaanites; and, probably, great swarms of them had, in particular places, obliged the inhabitants to leave their cities.

The name of the god *Baalzebub* means *Lord of flies*; probably, because he was supposed to preserve

his worshippers from those insects ; and *Beelzebub*, which is the same name, we are told, also, is “ the prince of the devils.” (Matt. xii. 24. x. 25.) Here, then, the very chief of the devils could not preserve Pharaoh and his people. But God severed the land of Goshen, in which his people dwelt, that no swarms of flies were there, that they might know that he is “ the Lord in the midst of earth.”

Pharaoh, now, began to give way, and offered to let the Israelites sacrifice ; but it must be “ in the land.” Moses contended that they must go “ three days’ journey into the wilderness.” Pharaoh would let them go into the wilderness, only not very far. Moses intreats for him, the flies were removed, “ there remained not one.” But “ Pharaoh hardened his heart, at this time, also, neither would he let the people go.”

V. In the IXth chapter, from the 1st, to the end of the 7th verse, is an account of the fifth plague, *the murrain amongst the cattle*. The Bull and the Cow were held in particular reverence in Egypt, and were actually worshipped in some of their temples ; a practice which the Israelites learned from them, and, afterwards, practised, when they set up the golden calf in the wilderness. The murrain amongst the cattle, therefore, shewed that these gods were not able to protect them, but even fell victims themselves. *Some of all sorts* died, for that must be the meaning of the words, (verse 6.) “ all the cattle of Egypt died,” as we find some remained to be afflicted with the boils and blains, and some to be killed by the hail. “ But of the cattle of the children of Israel died not one.” But, still, “ the heart of Pharaoh was hardened.”

VI. Another, and a more afflictive plague, there-

fore, awaited him. "The Lord said unto Moses and unto Aaron," (verse 8.) "Take you handfuls of *the ashes of the furnace*, and let Moses sprinkle it towards heaven, in the sight of Pharaoh; and it shall become small dust in all the land of Egypt, and shall be *a boil breaking forth with blains*, upon man and upon beast throughout all the land of Egypt." The Israelites had long been oppressed in the *furnace*, or brick-kiln, in labouring for the Egyptians; and, now, the ashes of the furnace become *burning sores* to them. The priests, too, prided themselves upon their skill in medicine; but their skill is of no avail, for even "the magicians could not stand before Moses, because of the boils; for the boil was upon the magicians, and upon all the Egyptians." They had, already, acknowledged that the plagues were from God: but they, still, in some way, countenanced Pharaoh, when they should have endeavoured to have persuaded him to acknowledge the God of the Hebrews, and to favour his people.

But there was, probably, a farther meaning and judgment in this plague. The Egyptians had several cities in which, at particular seasons, they sacrificed *men*. The persons selected for this had bright hair, and a particular complexion, such as was seldom found among the native Egyptians, and it is probable, that, while the Israelites were in Egypt, the victims were chosen from among them. They were burnt alive upon a high altar: and, thus, sacrificed for the good of the people, as it was called. At the end of the sacrifice, the priests gathered together the *ashes* of the victims, and scattered them upwards in the air; probably, with the view, that, where any atom of this dust was wafted, a blessing might be entailed. Such are the practices of idolatry and

superstition : and, now, behold, instead of a blessing, a boil breaking forth with blains burning all their bodies.

VII. From the 13th verse to the end of the 35th, the end of the chapter, we have an account of the seventh plague, of *rain, hail, thunder* and *fire*. Rain and hail were of very rare occurrence in Egypt. *Water*, we have seen, was considered as a *deity*, and so was *fire*. Much of their cattle had, already, perished by the murrain, and the boils and blains : notice was given of this plague, that those who “feared the Lord” might take their cattle in. “So there was hail*, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt, since it became a nation.” And, not only were the cattle destroyed, but “the flax and the barley was smitten ; for the barley was in the ear, and the flax was balled,” that is, the head appeared above the stalk. Thus was the flax destroyed which was to afford them linen for their garments ; and the barley which was to make them barley-wine or beer. Pharaoh acknowledged he had sinned, and the Lord was entreated to stop the tremendous storm ; but, when “the rain and the hail and the thunders were ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart, he and his servants.”

VIII. The Xth chapter, from the 1st, to the end of the 20th verse, gives an account of the plague of *Locusts*. These are animals like grasshoppers, but six, or seven, inches long, and coming in immense swarms like clouds, and darkening even the sun. Wherever they alight they destroy every plant

* On the dreadful devastations made by *hail*, see a Note in Sermon xxiv.

and herb, and tree, the grass, the corn, the fruit and the trees, and their very bite is poisonous, injuring the trees, for future vegetation. This plague was foretold, and the servants, or courtiers, of Pharaoh remonstrated. He would let the men go, but not the children. So the plague was sent. Pharaoh again says to Moses and Aaron, "I have sinned against the Lord your God." Moses intreats the Lord, the locusts are taken away,—but, still, Pharaoh's heart is hardened.

IX. In the Xth chapter, from 21st, to the end of the 26th verse, is an account of the *ninth* plague, "*darkness* over all the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be *felt*." The Egyptians, not only worshipped the Sun and the Moon and Light; but, as they made a person and deity of almost every thing, they made deities of Darkness and Night, thinking that they were more ancient than Light and the Sun. And as, in a spiritual view, they resisted the evidence of all these miracles, and "loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil," (John iii. 19.) so, now, they are punished with "a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days: they saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings." The Psalmist says, (lxxviii. 50.) that, in the plagues of Egypt, God "sent evil angels among them." And the author of the Book of Wisdom (xvii. 3—6. 21) says, that they "were troubled with strange apparitions,"—"and sad visions appeared unto them with heavy countenances. No power of the fire might give them light: neither could the bright flames of the stars endure to lighten that horrible night. Only there appeared unto them a fire kindled of itself, very dreadful: for, being

much terrified, they thought the things which they saw, to be worse than the sight they saw not.”—“Over them was spread a heavy night, an image of that darkness which should, afterward, receive them: but yet were they unto themselves more grievous than the darkness.”

Pharaoh, now, would consent, that the Israelites and their little ones should go, but not their flocks and herds; but Moses said, “Our cattle, also, shall go with us; there shall not a hoof be left behind; for thereof must we take to serve the Lord our God.”

The last three verses of this chapter, it is supposed, are misplaced, and should come in before the last sentence of the 8th verse of the XIth chapter, as Moses did see the face of Pharaoh again, to denounce the tenth plague, the death of the first-born; but this and the Passover are the subjects of our next Sunday’s meditations.

We will, now, then, consider the phrase, “I will harden his heart,” iv. 21, and other places, (vii. 3, xiv. 4, 17.) and “the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh,” ix. 12, and other places, (vii. 13, x. 1, 20, 27. xiv. 8.): on which it might be quite sufficient to say, that the best Hebrew scholars inform us, that the passages should have been translated, “I will permit his heart to be hardened,” “the Lord suffered the heart of Pharaoh to be so hardened,” and so on; and the same phrase, which, viii. 13, is translated “he hardened Pharaoh’s heart,” is in our version of vii. 22, viii. 19, and ix. 7, 35, correctly translated, “and the heart of Pharaoh was hardened.”

So, likewise, the passage, ix. 15, 16, which, in our translation, sounds so very harsh, should have been rendered, “For, if, now, I had stretched out my

hand, and had smitten thee and thy people with the pestilence, thou shouldest have been cut off from the earth. But, truly, on this very account have I caused thee to subsist, that I might cause thee to see my power; and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth*." This is, I think, sufficient to satisfy us. But there are some other considerations to which it may not be improper to give a little attention.

There is a sense—a figurative sense—in which God may be said to *do* that, which is the *consequence* of what he does, though he may not intend it, nor wish it to be done: as in this case of Pharaoh: what God did had the effect to make Pharaoh harden his own wicked heart, though it ought to have had a directly contrary effect, and softened it. God might, in justice, have cut Pharaoh off for his first blasphemy, when he said, (verse 2.) "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." But God spared him, and every fresh message by Moses, and every fresh plague, was a renewed *mercy*, if he would but have availed himself of it, and repented, and humbled himself before God. Let us bring the matter home to *ourselves*. Every unrenewed heart is like Pharaoh's. How often do we see a sinner acting in the very same way. God warns him, by his own conscience, or by his word, or by his ministers,—he hardens his heart, and sins notwithstanding:—God sends another warning, and, perhaps, accompanies it by some affliction, some judgment, some plague,—his property is, perhaps, lessened—he feels it—perhaps, makes a resolution to

* Horne on the Study of the Sacred Scriptures, Vol. I. p. 618.

reform—but he hardens his heart :—he sins again—another warning, perhaps, comes, and other visitations,—his person is, perhaps, afflicted with disease and sickness,—he feels it, he makes *strong* resolutions of amendment,—he, perhaps, intreats the minister of God to pray for him,—the plague is, perhaps, removed,—he recovers :—but, is it to repentance and amendment of life ?—no : it is to fresh and greater transgressions, greater hardness of heart ;—what the Lord intends for his good, makes him but worse. We have seen how Pharaoh,—as it is called in trading,—*haggled* with God. At first he will not let the Israelites go at all—then they may go, but not into the wilderness—then they may go into the wilderness, but not far,—then the men may go, but not the children,—then the men and children may go, but not the cattle,—But God will have *all* ; “ not a hoof shall be left behind.” So the sinner : he will give up one sin, but not another—he will give up his favourite sin, *but* has a reserve for just now and then ;—he would willingly do it, *but* his calling, his business, his connections, won’t let him : God, however, requires a surrender of every thing. Yet, still, perhaps, longer time, another trial is allowed, some visitation more nearly touches him,—the loss of his *first-born*, or the wife of his bosom,—he feels, perhaps,—he sheds a few tears,—but a little time weakens the impression,—his heart is more and more hardened,—he fills up the measure of his iniquity, and is overwhelmed in the gulf of perdition. I appeal to my hearers of any age and observation, whether they have not *seen* repeated instances of this ? And let me, farther, ask, Whether we do not *all*, in some measure, *feel* the same rebellious spirit in *ourselves* ?

The message of the Lord God, then, comes unto us all, "How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me?" But the language of proud man is, "I will never humble." Thus men *speaking out* to their fellow creatures against whom they have transgressed; and, if they do not *say it*, they *act it*, against God. But "the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;" and "a broken and contrite heart" God "will not despise." (Psalm li. 17.) "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his ways and live. Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways, for why will ye die?" (Ezek. xxxiii. 11.) And,

"O merciful God, who hast made all men, and hatest nothing that thou hast made, nor wouldest the death of a sinner, but, rather, that he should be converted and live; Have mercy upon us; take from us all ignorance, hardness of heart, and contempt of thy Word; and so make us of thy flock, that we may be saved among the true Israelites, under the great shepherd, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth, with Thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen *.

* Third Collect for Good Friday.

SERMON XIV.

GOOD FRIDAY.—GENESIS XI—XXII.

THE CALL OF ABRAHAM, THE FATHER OF THE FAITHFUL,
AND THE SACRIFICE OF ISAAC.

GENESIS xxii. 8.

Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a Lamb for a burnt offering.

IN my Sermon on the First Sunday in Lent, when the course of the chapters would have led me to speak of the Call of Abraham, I stated, that, as the first Lesson, at morning service, on *Good Friday*, is the xxiid chapter of Genesis, which treats of the most remarkable instance of the faith of Abraham, in his readiness to sacrifice his son Isaac, I should defer the consideration of the call and faith of Abraham to that day,—and I, therefore, proceed now to fulfil my intention.

The first mention that is made of Abram is at the 27th verse of the XIth chapter of Genesis, where we find, that he was the son of Terah, together with Nahor and Haran, and that he married Sarai, the daughter of his father by another mother, (Gen. xx. 12.); and that, in the course of seven generations from Shem, this branch, at least, of his descendants had fallen into idolatry; and, therefore, (xii. 1.) “the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s

house, unto a land that I will shew thee ; and I will make of thee a great nation ; and I will bless thee, and make thy name great ; and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee, and in *thee* shall all families of the earth be blessed." Now St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Galatians, (iii. 8, 16.), says expressly, that, in these words, God " preached before the *Gospel* unto Abraham," and that the " seed" here spoken of was CHRIST. Abram was, at this time, it appears, seventy-five years of age, and Sarai, who was ten years younger, was barren ; yet he believed God, and journied, taking his nephew Lot with him, unto Sichem, in the land in Canaan, a distance of nearly eight hundred miles ; when " the Lord," again, appeared unto Abram, " for his encouragement," and said, " Unto thy seed," though not to thyself, " will I give this land ; and there builded he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him," as he did at the other places to which he removed, offering his burnt-offering, the lamb, the type of the Messiah.

At length a famine arose in the land, when Abram, to maintain his family, went into Egypt, it should seem, without consulting God ; and, his faith having thus far failed him, he departed, yet farther, from God ; and, though a great *promise* was made to him and his seed, he feared for his life, and prevailed upon Sarai to say she was only his *sister*, lest, had she said she was his wife, the Egyptians should put him to death, in order to obtain her.

The XIIIth chapter gives an account of the return of Abram and Lot out of Egypt, with their flocks and herds so much increased, that they could not be maintained together, and there was strife between their herdsmen ; on which occasion Abram displayed

the most peaceable and disinterested disposition, giving the choice of the best country to Lot, as I mentioned in my Sermon on the first Sunday in Lent. After which generous act God renewed his promise of the land of Canaan to Abram.

The XIVth chapter gives an account of the war which Chedorlaomer and his allies made upon the king of Sodom and his allies; and how Lot and his family were taken prisoners with all his goods, and were rescued by Abram; when the king of Sodom would have given up, in gratitude, all his goods to Abram, but Abram would accept none.

The XVth chapter begins with stating, that, "After these things, the word of the Lord came unto Abram, in a vision, saying, Fear not Abram, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. And Abram said, Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus. And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed; and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir." The excellent Hervey, in illustrating this subject, says, "There was so much gall in this calamity, that it embittered every other species of happiness. Visited by this affliction, the patriarch could taste no joy in his late signal victory; all his worldly prosperity was insipid; and he seems to have been incapable of relishing any other comfort; *What wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless?* I would intreat the reader," he says, "to take particular notice of *this* circumstance. It will have the same effect upon *Abraham's* obedience, and the whole series of his difficulties, as *a magnifying* glass has upon the objects to which it is applied*."

* Theron and Aspasio, Letter xi. Works, Vol. III. p. 311.

“And, behold, the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir, but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look, now, towards heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them; and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the Lord, and he,” that is, God, “counted it to him for righteousness.” Thus was Abram, as St. Paul and St. James both say, “justified by *faith*, being, as yet, uncircumcised.” (Rom. iv. 3. Gal. iii. 6. James ii. 23.) The remainder of the chapter gives an account of the ratifying of this covenant between God and Abram, and wherein is foretold the troubles of the Israelites in Egypt.

The XVIth chapter gives us another melancholy instance of the failure of faith in the father of the faithful and his wife. Sarai grew impatient at the delay of the fulfilment of God’s promise, and desired Abraham to take her hand-maid Hagar to be his wife, in the hope of having the promised *seed* by her; and Abram, without consulting God, hearkened to the voice of his wife, and consented. It is the fate of *expedients*, however, generally, if not always, to fail of the end proposed, and to bring vexation and disappointment. Hagar was set up, and was insolent, Sarai was vexed, and the peace of Abram’s family was destroyed. Sarai behaved harshly to Hagar, and she ran away; but, being admonished of God, she returned to her duty, and bore Ishmael.

In the XVIIth chapter, we are told, that, when “Abram was ninety years old and nine,” that is, thirteen years after the birth of Ishmael, God renewed his covenant with Abram, and changed his name from Abram, *an high, or mighty, father*, to

Abraham, *the father of a multitude*; and the name of Sarai, which signifies a *princess*, he changed to Sarah, which signifies *a multitude*, or *she shall be the mother of many people*; and God instituted *circumcision*, as the seal, or token, of his covenant; Abraham and Ishmael, and all the males of his house being circumcised, and every male child of his posterity being ordered to be circumcised on the eighth day after his birth. This is, surely, proof, that God, through the instrumentality of parents, will receive into covenant with him those who are, as yet, incapable of understanding and answering to it. And it is in imitation of this, under the Christian dispensation, (God having been pleased to establish the unbloody rite of *baptism*, in the stead of the bloody rite of *circumcision*, as the token of the Christian Covenant,) that we admit *infants* into covenant with God in Christ by this significant ceremony; the sponsors answering for the child, that, when it comes to be of an age to understand the meaning of it, he shall *confirm* and take the vow upon himself.

The XVIIIth chapter gives an account of the visit of the Angels to Abraham, and, afterwards, to Lot, of which I spoke, in some measure, in my Discourse on the first Sunday in Lent, on the destruction of Sodom; and shall have occasion to speak again, as to who the Angels were on Trinity Sunday. That part of it, which relates to our present subject, begins at the 9th verse, where the promise is again, and more particularly, renewed, of a child to Abraham and Sarah. Sarah, indeed, at first received the promise with derision; but, on being reprov'd, she, no doubt, repented, as in the XIth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the 11th verse, she is celebrated for her *faith*.

The XIXth chapter contains the account of the destruction of Sodom and the deliverance of Lot, of which I treated fully in my Discourse on the first Sunday in Lent.

The XXth chapter returns to the history of Abraham, and of his journey from Mamre to Gerar, where,—strange to say!—though the promise of God had been renewed to them, their faith again failed, and Abraham again had recourse to falsehood, in denying Sarah as his wife; by which he brought both himself and wife, and the king and people of Gerar, into trouble,—so ineffectual is falsehood. That is a golden maxim, “The first truth is easiest to avow*.” Perhaps there never was a falsehood told, that the utterer had not reason to repent it.

The XXIst chapter brings us, at length, to the birth of the long-promised Son, who was called *Isaac*, or *laughter*, on account of the joy which he occasioned to his parents. But the birth of the true heir was a cause of disappointment and vexation to the bondwoman and her son, who mocked and persecuted him; for which they were cast out, thereby exhibiting an *allegory*, or *type* of the *bondage* of the *Law* and the *free grace* of the *Gospel*, as is explained by St. Paul, in the IVth chapter of his Epistle to the Galatians. (21—31.) The remainder of this chapter gives an account of a covenant made between Abraham and Abimelech.

“And it came to pass, after these things,” (see the beginning of the XXIIId chapter,) “that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am.” This account seems to be directly contrary to what St. James says, (Ep. i.

* The Tragedy of ‘Douglas,’ Act 1. See The English Drama Purified, Vol. I. p. 273.

13.) “Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.” But the word here translated *tempted*, means *tried*, or *explored*. That is, “God sounded the depth, and measured the height of his servant’s faith; in order to erect an everlasting monument of the victorious efficacy of this sacred principle; and exhibit an illustrious pattern to all them, who should hereafter believe*.”

And God “said, Take, now, thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering, upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.” What a *trial* is here for the heart of most fathers,—of almost all fathers!—to take his *son*, his *only* son, the son of *promise*, the son of his *old age*, the son whom he *loved*, the son from whom he *expected a numerous issue*, and to offer him up for a burnt-offering! What doubts, what difficulties, what expostulations would have arisen in the breasts of most fathers;—nay, might we not suggest what may be *expected* from him, who had twice denied the providence of God, and denied being the husband of Sarah, lest he should be killed; who had taken the hand-maid, because he doubted of having issue by his wife,—who had expostulated with the Lord, “Wilt thou destroy the righteous?” “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” No, there was nothing of this. Abraham’s faith was strengthened; he knew, that it was the God who made the earth, “the God of the spirits of all flesh,” who had promised that “the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent’s head,” who had appointed that

* Hervey’s Works, Vol. III. p. 313.

burnt-offerings should be offered, and had “had respect unto Abel and his offering” of a Lamb; who had taken up the righteous Enoch to heaven without his tasting death, and who had preserved Noah and his family, when the millions of the ungodly perished; it was the God who had called him from his country and his kindred, who had appeared to him at Sichem, and promised him the land of Canaan for his posterity; who had plagued Pharaoh for his sake, and given him abundance of riches; who had given him victory over the confederate kings, had thrice appeared to him since, and rebuked the king of Gerar for his sake,—*this* was the God who said unto Abraham, “Take, now, thy son, thine only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. And Abraham,” all obedience and alacrity, “rose up, early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt-offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. Then, on the third day,” after a journey of nearly forty miles, “Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide you, here, with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you. And Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife: and they went both of them together. And Isaac,” accustomed to see his father offer burnt-offerings, “spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father? and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood; but

where is *the lamb* for a burnt-offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering." Abraham, it is probable, in this answer, like many of the other prophets, in their predictions, did not thoroughly understand the meaning of his own words. God so over-ruled his tongue, that it more fully expressed the divine decree than his own parental idea*. "So, they went both of them together. And they came to the place which God had told him of: and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order; and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar on the wood." Abraham had, now, no doubt, disclosed to his son the command which God had laid upon him; and Isaac, the faithful son of a faithful father, makes no resistance, no hesitation, "he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and, as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." (Isaiah liii. 7.) Isaac, it is supposed by some, was, now, twenty-five years of age, while others think he was thirty-three, the age at which his blessed anti-type, "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," (John i. 29.) actually laid down his life, a sin-offering for the transgressions of all the world: and Abraham might well have said, "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. iii. 17.) "And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son." Now was evidenced what St. Paul says, (Heb. xi. 17—19.) "By faith, Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises, offered up his only-begotten son; of whom it was said, that In Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that

* See Hervey, Works, Vol. III. p. 320.

God was able to raise him up, even from the dead ; from whence, also, he received him in a figure.” That is, he, being, already, dead in his fixed intention and resolve, which was what God wanted ; God revoked his sentence, or command, and gave him back to him, as if from the dead. “ It was the *trial* that God intended, not the *fact*. In all the temptations he leads us into, he means not our grief, much less our fall, but our benefit : that is the design of every cross : we sow in tears, that we may reap in joy *.”

“ And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham : and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him : for, now, I know, that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.” “ And did not God *know* this before ? Yes, doubtless, but it was necessary that men and angels, nay, that Abraham himself, should know it. The good angels, that they might adore the mercy of God towards men ; the bad, that they might revere his justice, in all the favours he shewed to that good man : men that they should imitate so excellent a pattern of faith and obedience, and Abraham himself have the unspeakable comfort of this testimony of his sincerity ; and be assured, that his fear of God was genuine and true, because he approved his love to his Maker to be greater than the love he bore to his son, his only son, whom he loved.—This holy experience is one of the sweetest fruits of tribulation and sufferings, and the best and most useful kind of assurance †.”

“ And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked,

* Wogan, Vol. II. p. 373.

† Wogan, ditto.

and behold, behind him, a ram, caught in a thicket, by his horns, and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt-offering in the stead of his son." NEVER, probably, was sacrifice offered in a more lively faith, nor in a more heart-felt and chastened joy!

I am unwilling to pass over without a further notice the circumstance of the ram being "caught in a *thicket* by the horns." Why caught in a *thicket*? God could as easily have caused the lamb to have *come*, and offered itself to Abraham, as he had caused all the animals to come to Noah at the ark, or, as he caused, afterwards, the lion and the ass to remain by the dead body of the disobedient prophet. May there not, here, be an emblem of that *crown of thorns* with which the head of the *Lamb of God*,—the anti-type of Isaac and of this lamb,—was encircled, when he was offered up upon the altar of the cross? May we not think that we hear the voice of God saying upon that occasion, as it had done before to Ezekiel, (ii. 6.), "Son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though *briers* and *thorns* be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions?"

"And Abraham called the name of that place *Jehovah-jireh*: as it is said, to this day, *In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen.*" The translation, *In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen*, does not give an intelligible sense, if any sense at all; and it should have been rendered, *In the mount the Lord will be seen*; or *In the mount the Lord will provide*: as if the sacred historian had said, "This memorable event gave rise to, at least is an eminent exemplification of, that *proverbial* expression, which is commonly used at this day, *In the mount of difficulty*, or in the very crisis of need, when matters seem to be

irretrievable and desperate, then *the Lord will appear as a present help*. Man's extremity is God's opportunity*."

And God, in this instance, as in every other, shewed that he was Abraham's "shield and his exceeding great reward," (Gen. xv. 1.) for "the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven, the second time, and said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord; for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: that, in blessing, I will bless thee, and, in multiplying, I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." And had not Abraham, now, abundant cause to "count it all joy" that he had fallen into this temptation, or trial, "knowing that the trying of faith worketh patience?" "Patience," had, in him, "her perfect work," and he was "perfect and entire, wanting nothing."—"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for, when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." (See James i. 2—4, 12.)

Though the object of having this chapter read as a Lesson, on this day, is, principally, to apply it to the great event which we commemorate; yet the instruction which it teaches to every one of *us* is far too important to be wholly passed over.

Though God does not converse with us, now, "face to face, as a man does with his friend," (Exod. xxxiii. 11.) as he did with Abraham; yet he is often

* Hervey, Works, Vol. III. p. 323.

pleased to *try us* in the course of his *providence*, and *that* by very great and painful trials. He does *not* call upon us to offer an only and beloved son as a *burnt-offering*; but he *does*, often, call upon us, to give up to him, and that without a question, or a murmur, a beloved, perhaps an only child, a beloved wife, or husband, a brother, a sister, or “a friend who is as one’s own soul,” (Deut. xiii. 6.), perhaps to give up one’s worldly comforts, wealth, station, fame, or worldly reputation; perhaps to endure the alienation of relatives and friends for the truth’s sake,—in short “Whatsoever is dearest upon earth,” says Bishop Hall *, “is our *Isaac*; happy are we, if we can sacrifice it to God: those shall never rest with Abraham, that cannot sacrifice with Abraham.” And hear our blessed Lord himself, (Matt. x. 37—39.) “He that loveth father, or mother, more than me, is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son, or daughter, more than me, is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.”

But, sometimes, the *sacrifice* which God calls upon us to make is, neither a beloved relative, nor, yet, a worldly comfort,—it is some *darling*, but destructive, *sin*, dear as a right hand, or a right eye, (Matt. v. 29, 30.), *this* must be *slain* upon God’s altar; the old man must be crucified, and the whole body of sin utterly abolished, that, being dead to sin, we may live again unto righteousness †.

But we proceed to the peculiar business of the day. Our blessed Lord said to the Jews, that

* Contemplations, Vol. I. p. 32.

† See the second prayer after baptizing an infant, and Romans vi. 6.

“ Abraham rejoiced to see his day : and he saw it, and was glad.” (John viii. 56.) What did he mean by *his day*? Undoubtedly the day of his coming into the world to save mankind from the curse passed upon Adam, by rendering up his life upon the cross, an atonement for the sins of all those who believe him. And how did Abraham see this day? He saw it in the promise, that “ the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent’s head.” (Gen. iii. 15.) He saw it in the Lamb slain upon the altar as a burnt-offering, the “ Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” (Rev. xiii. 8.) “ the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.” (John i. 29.) He saw it, no doubt, in the command, “ Take now thy son, thy only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering, upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.” Such a proposal, or command, from any one but the Great God of heaven and earth, the Maker and Lord of all things, had been unlawful, had been murder. But what was it to Abraham? “ It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good :” (1 Sam. iii. 18.) It is the Lord, he must be obeyed. But Abraham might see much in it to make him *glad*. If the Lamb slain upon the altar prefigured “ the seed of the woman” which was to “ bruise the serpent’s head,” and was a child of promise, might not *this* be the *very seed*? and, if not, must it not be *a more lively type* than the unconscious Lamb? This would be the case, whether his son was suffered to go free again, or was actually slain, and restored again to life. At any rate, the God of all wisdom and of all goodness must do right. The order is given, and obeyed; and, therein, the father of the faithful, and the son, “ the faithful and

true," (Rev. xix. 11.) became the most lively types of God, the Father and the Son: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii. 16.) But, as the will of the Father and the Son is ever ONE, so the Son "gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God, and our Father:" (Gal. i. 4.) Able to have rescued himself, he, nevertheless, went forth to mount Moriah, bearing the wood whereon he was to be offered, "brought as a Lamb to the slaughter, and, as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." (Isaiah liii. 7.) The true sacrifice must be slain. But, like the paschal lamb, "a bone of him is not broken;" (Exod. xii. 46. John xix. 36.); and, on the third day, he rises from the dead, the conqueror of the serpent, of sin and of death*.

And, for this, let *us* join in that new and heavenly song, "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth."—"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches, and wisdom and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."—"Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." (Rev. v. 9—13.) *Amen.*

* There is in the works of Jones of Nayland, "A Dissertation on the offering up of Isaac by Abraham," which will well repay the trouble of perusal.

SERMON XV.

EASTER DAY.—EXODUS XI—XV.

THE DEATH OF THE FIRST-BORN, THE PASSOVER, THE EXODUS.

EXODUS xii. 11.

It is the Lord's Passover.

WE have already considered nine of the ten Plagues of Egypt, to the end, or nearly so, of the Xth chapter of Exodus. The XIth chapter states,

“ And the Lord said unto Moses, Yet will I bring one plague more upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go hence: when he shall let you go, he shall surely thrust you out hence altogether. Speak, now, in the ears of the people, and let every man borrow of his neighbour, and every woman of her neighbour, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold.” It is to be observed, that the word here, and iii. 22, and xii. 35, translated *borrow*, means *asked*, or *demand*ed. It is the same word as is used Psal ii. 8, and is there translated *ask*: “ Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance.” So that the Israelites did not obtain this gold and silver and raiment, under a pretence of *borrowing* to return again, but they, probably, *asked*, or *demand*ed, it as the reward, or payment, for their labour, so long kept back; and the Egyptians were,

now, happy to purchase, or obtain, their departure at any cost *.

“And Moses said, Thus saith the Lord, About midnight, will I go out into the midst of Egypt; and all the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the first-born of the maid-servant that is behind the mill; and all the first-born of beast.” A former Pharaoh had ordered, not only the first-born, but every male of the Israelites to be put to death; this, therefore, was but a just retribution. But, besides this, God had ordered Moses to say to Pharaoh, (iv. 22, 23.) “Israel is my son, even my first-born: and I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and, if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy first-born.” Here had been a reason and a threat, sufficient, one should have thought, to have prevailed with Pharaoh. But he did not attend to it, even after the infliction of nine tremendous plagues; nor yet, though it is now foretold, and the precise time fixed. Moses adds, “And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more.”

The Egyptians were remarkable for their lamentations for the dead, when the women would run out into the streets beating their breasts and tearing their hair; and one of their great religious ceremonies was lamenting for the *death* of one of their *gods*. Now they are to have real lamentation to the full.

“But,” says Moses, “against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against

* See Orton, Vol. I. p. 292, 331, and Horne's Introduction, Vol. I. p. 617.

man or beast; that ye may know how that the Lord doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel. And all these thy servants shall come down unto me, and bow down themselves unto me, saying, Get thee out, and all the people that follow thee: and, after that, I will go out."

Then should come in the last three verses of the former chapter, which have been misplaced, as I stated in my last.

That part of the XIIth chapter, which is contained from the 1st to the end of the 28th verse, gives an account of what God had said to Moses some days before; only Moses would not interrupt the account of the plagues to bring it in sooner; and, now, it is necessary. He says, verse 3, that, "in the tenth day of the month,"—so that God was speaking *before* the 10th,—“they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for a house:”—“and ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.” So that, when Moses said, chapter xi. verse 4, “Thus saith the Lord, About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt, and all the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die,” he is *then* speaking on the *fourteenth*, and the lamb was to be killed *that evening*, and the death of the first-born was to be *that night*, that is the beginning of the fifteenth; as their days,—as we observed in the account of the creation,—began in the evening, lasting from the sun-set of, what is, with us, one day, to the sun-set of the next: “the evening and the morning were the day.” In addition to this, it may be observed, that, according to the Hebrew, the beginning of the first verse should

have been translated “Now the Lord had spoken unto Moses;” and, in the 12th verse, instead of “*this* night,” it should have been “*that* night.”

In the 7th verse, God directs, that, having killed the lamb, “they shall take of the blood,”—and the 22nd verse directs, farther, “take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the bason, and strike the lintel,” or upper part of the door frame, “and the two side-posts with the blood that is in the bason”—“And the blood”—verse 13.—“shall be to you for a token upon the houses where you are: and, when I see the blood, I will *pass over* you, and the plague shall not be upon you, to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.” This is the origin of the Jews’ feast of *the Passover*, and we learn expressly from the New Testament, that the killing of the *lamb* and the sprinkling of the *blood* were a type of the death of Christ, as St. Paul says,—1 Cor. v. 7.—“Christ, our *passover*, is sacrificed for us.” In the book of Revelation, xiii. 8, he is called “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” By John the Baptist,—John i. 29,—he is called, “the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.” And St. Peter (1 Ep. i. 18—21.) says, “Ye know, that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot; who, verily, was fore-ordained, before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you; who, by him, do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God.”

It was, also, ordered, Exod. xii. 46, respecting the

paschal Lamb, “neither shall ye break a bone thereof.” And St. John informs us,—xix. 33, 36,—that, when the Jews petitioned Pilate, that the legs of Jesus, and those crucified with him, should be broken, the soldiers brake the legs of the two thieves, “But, when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs,”—“that the Scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken.” And, though “a bone was not to be broken,” yet his blood was to be shed; and we are, likewise, told,—verse 34,—that “one of the soldiers, with a spear, pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout *blood* and water.”

What, then, the blood of the lamb was to the children of Israel in Egypt, a token, that, where *that* was, God would *pass-over* and not destroy, such is the *blood* of *Christ* to all true Israelites, to all true Christians, to those who receive him as their Saviour, and look to God for redemption solely through his merits and mediation. Where God sees his precious blood-shedding received as the only hope and trust, there he will *pass-over*: and our faith in this blood-shedding will be expressed by partaking of the *Christian passover*, the blessed Sacrament, the *bread* broken in remembrance of his *body broken*, the *wine poured out* in remembrance of his *blood shed upon the cross*. And I appeal to all who profess themselves to be Christians, and yet neglect this sacred ordinance, what will be their state, when God shall pass through the land to smite, and shall *not* see, at their house, the *blood* applied as he has commanded?

At verse 11., it is said, “And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the Lord’s Passover.” Whether it was intended

by God, that this manner of eating it should be observed at this time only, or should be continued, is not stated. But the Jews, certainly, varied from it, afterwards. Instead of the blood being sprinkled on the side-posts and the lintel, it was carried to the tabernacle and the temple, and sprinkled and poured upon the altar, in conformity to the command, Levit. xvii. 3—6.; and, in our Saviour's time, we see him and his disciples, according to the custom of the country, lying along upon their sort of couches, their shoes off, and no staves in their hands. I mention this to shew, that, in the *circumstances*, or *forms*, of these ordinances, even our blessed Lord was not particular, so long as the *spirit* and *essentials* were kept up. This may plead *our* excuse, for differing, in some particulars, from the original form of the Lord's Supper. *We* take it in the *morning*, because the body is not clogged with heavy food, or heated with strong drink; and we *kneel*, rather than lie extended, as being, we think, more suited to so solemn an act of worship. Even our brethren who dissent from us, and object to our mode, vary from the original ordinance in several particulars: they do not take it in a private house, but in their place of public worship; their minister does not first wash the feet of the partakers; they sit, our Lord and his disciples reclined upon couches; they use leavened bread, our Lord unleavened.

And, now that we are considering one sacrament, I will turn to a passage which relates to the other.—xiv. 22., it is said, “And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea, upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left.” Upon this St. Paul observes, 1 Cor. x. 1, 2., “Brethren, I would not that ye should

be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were *all baptized* unto Moses in the cloud, and in the sea." Here, then, were the *children* and the *infants* all *baptized*, as well as the adults. I call this *alone* a very strong argument in favour of infant baptism; joined with the consideration of infants being admitted into covenant with God, at eight days old, by circumcision, I hold it undeniable. Nor is it a circumstance to be disregarded, that "all were baptized in the sea," though not one of them was wetted: "they went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground, and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left;" and, yet, they were a sufficient "outward and visible sign" of the water of baptism. Surely, then, when we, in a colder climate, *sprinkle* the child with water, we need not be accused of coming short of the thing signified. It will strengthen this argument, I think, if we consider, along with it, the case of Noah and his family in the ark, who, as St. Peter expresses it,—1 Ep. iii. 20, 21,—“were saved by water:” which was “the like figure whereunto even baptism, doth, also, now, save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. But, here, again, those who were baptized, were so without an actual wetting by water,—and it may be, also, observed, that one mode of applying it in action, or in figure, was by a *sprinkling*, or pouring, from above.

But, to return from this digression :

At the 15th verse of the XIIth chapter, God proceeds to give orders respecting the Feast of unleavened bread,—“Seven days shall ye eat unleavened

bread.”—“ And, in the first day, there shall be a holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation to you.” The first day was the 14th of the month Abib, on which they sacrificed the pass-over, and early the next morning departed out of Egypt, or began to depart from under the oppression of Pharaoh ; and the seventh day was that on the morning of which the Israelites came out in safety from the Red Sea, and saw their enemies overwhelmed, and held a holy convocation, and sung the triumphal Song of Moses.

The Passover and the Feast of unleavened bread being thus ordered and observed, “ it came to pass, (verse 29.) that, at midnight, the Lord smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sat on his throne, unto the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon ; and all the first-born of cattle. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians ; and there was a great cry in Egypt ; for there was not a house where there was not one dead. And he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up and get you forth from among my people, both you and the children of Israel ; and go, serve the Lord, as ye have said. Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone, and bless me, also.” This is he, who, the day before, had said, “ See my face no more ; for, in that day thou seest my face, thou shalt die.” And, now, he says, “ Bless me also.” There comes a day in which the stoutest sinner is anxious for the blessing of the minister of God.

“ And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste ; for they said, We be all dead men.”

On the children of Israel “borrowing,” or asking, of the Egyptians, mentioned verse 35,¹ 36, I have already, spoken. “And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth,” so called from the *booths*, or tents, which they pitched there, “about six hundred thousand on foot, that were men, besides children.” A prodigious increase from seventy souls, which was the number which went into Egypt! “And a mixed multitude went up, also, with them;” strangers of several nations, at least fifteen hundred thousand in all, some writers say more than two millions*; “and flocks and herds, even very much cattle.”

“Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt,” it is said, at verse 40, “was four hundred and thirty years.” But God had said unto Abram,—Genesis xv. 13.—“Know of a surety, that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them, and they shall afflict them, four hundred years.” And St. Stephen,—Acts vii. 6.—speaks of the same space of time; but St. Paul, again,—Gal. iii. 17—speaks of four hundred and thirty years. These are, seemingly, contradictions; and, likewise, the time which the children of Israel were in Egypt was but two hundred and fifteen years, as it was two hundred and fifteen years from God’s speaking to Abraham till Jacob’s going into Egypt. (Compare Gen. xii. 4. xvii. 1, 21. xxv. 26. and xlvii. 9.) Several methods have been suggested of reconciling, or settling, these, of which I will mention three. The first is that God, in Gen. xv. 13, and St. Stephen following him, make use of what is called *round numbers*, mentioning the hun-

* Orton, I. 339.

dreds, and leaving out *the odd tens*. Another method is, that, in Gen. xv. 13, the four hundred years is to be reckoned from *that time*, from the promise of God to Abraham; and the four hundred and thirty years, Exodus xii. 40, is from the call of Abraham, from his kindred and father's house, in Ur of the Chaldees, and takes in the sojourning in Canaan, as well as in Egypt. The third solution of the difficulty is, that, the Samaritan copy of the Pentateuch, and the Alexandrian manuscript of the Septuagint, have the verse, Exodus xii. 40, as follows, "Now the sojourning of the children of Israel *and of their fathers*, which they sojourned *in the land of Canaan* and in the land of Egypt, was five hundred and thirty years*." Any one of these considerations might, I think, be deemed sufficient; and, taken together, are perfectly satisfactory: and I should not even notice objections of this kind, but that they have been collected by persons unfriendly to revelation, and made the most of; and I wish you to think that, if any difficulties should, at any time, be suggested to you, there are, most probably, satisfactory ways of settling them.

From the 43d verse of the XIIth chapter, to the end of the 16th verse of the XIIIth chapter, are some further directions respecting the Passover, and the redemption of the first-born: but our time will not allow me to dwell upon them. At the 17th verse, it is said, "And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them, not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and

* See Horne's Introduction, Vol. I. p. 595, 602. Vol. II. p. 337.

they return to Egypt : but God led the people about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea." Bishop Hall observes upon this circumstance, "the same God that fetched them out, is both their guide and protector. How carefully doth he chuse their way ! not the nearer but the safer. He would not have his people so suddenly change from bondage to war. It is the wondrous mercy of God, that he hath respect, as to his own glory, so our infirmities. He intends them wars hereafter, but after some longer breathing, and more preparation ; his goodness so orders all, that evils are not ready for us, till we be ready for them*." And, if every individual would look back upon his past life, and well consider it, he would, no doubt, see this fully verified in *himself*. The days of youth and tenderness are mostly the days of sunshine ; as our years advance, we meet with more cares, sorrows, and trials ; but we bear up in manhood under troubles which would weigh us down in youth. At fifty, we say, "I could not have sustained this at twenty-five : " the promise of God to Ashur (Deut. xxxiii. 25.) is made good to all who look to him, "as thy days, so shall thy strength be."

"And the Lord went before them, by day, in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way ; and, by night, in a pillar of fire, to give them light ; to go by day and by night."—"And the Lord spake unto Moses, (chapter xiv.) saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baalzephon : before it shall ye encamp by the sea." The Israelites now turned, by God's command, from the direct road to the wilderness, into a narrow pass,

* Contemplation on the Plagues of Egypt, Vol. I. p. 76.

with the sea on their left, and the mountains on their right. Pharaoh repented now, that he had let them go from serving him, and he pursued after them “with six hundred chosen chariots and all the chariots of Egypt”—and “his horsemen and his army, and overtook them encamping by the sea, beside Pi-hahiroth, before Baal-zephon. And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lift up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid; and the children of Israel cried out unto the Lord,” and murmured against Moses, and said, they had better have remained in Egypt, than die there. What folly, what madness, what blasphemy was this! Could not the God who, in the plagues inflicted on the Egyptians, had set a difference between them and the Egyptians, who had preserved their first-born, when he killed those of the Egyptians, could not he preserve them in this *strait of difficulty*? (Gen. xxii. 14.) Yes. “And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew to you to-day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever: the Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.”

At the command of God, Moses lifts up his rod, and the waters of the sea divide, standing, like walls, on the right hand and the left; and the children of Israel take their way between. And, now, Pharaoh and his host think, that, where the Hebrews go, they may follow, and they enter this high-way of the sea, likewise. And, the Angel of God, and the pillar and the cloud, move, from before the Israelites, behind them, between them and the Egyptians, being light to Israel, but a gloomy darkness to the

Egyptians. And, now, when all the Egyptians were within the bed of the sea, “the Lord looked unto the host of the Egyptians, through the pillar of the fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians.” A dazzling brightness, perhaps, shone through the cloud and the pillar, and discovered to them the waters threatening on each side. Bishop Hall observes, “When God sees the Egyptians too far to return, he finds time to strike them with his last terror: they know not why, but they would return too late. Those chariots in which they trusted, now fail them; as having done service enough to carry them into perdition. God pursues them, and they cannot fly from him. Wicked men make equal haste, both to sin, and from judgment: the sea will shew them, that it regards the rod of Moses, not the sceptre of Pharaoh; and, now, as glad to have got the enemies of God at such advantage, shuts her mouth upon them, and swallows them up in her waves; and, after she had sport with them awhile, casts them upon her sand, for a spectacle of triumph to their adversaries*.”

“Thus, the Lord” (verse 30.) “saved Israel, that day, out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea-shore.” And this, we are told, (verse 2.) was “over against Baalzephon.” Which, it is supposed, from the name, was a place of worship, designed for the use of mariners, where stood the statue of a god, in the form, or partly in the form, of a *serpent*, the supposed guardian of those seas†. And it is said, farther, that the Egyptians believed, or at least made their slaves believe, that, if any of them offered to escape that

* Vol. I. p. 77.

† Bryant on the Plagues of Egypt, p. 399.

way into Arabia, this idol would arrest them, and force them to return to their lords and masters. And Pharaoh might probably animate his soldiers with an assurance of victory, by telling them, that their God had delivered their enemies into their hands*.”

In the XVth chapter is contained *the Song of Moses* on this glorious triumph of God over his enemies, one of the most ancient and sublime pieces of *poetry* extant. It was sung by the Israelites divided into semi-choruses, and in full chorus, and the women joined, in song, in music, and in dances, after the manner of those times: “And Miriam, the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider”—as if the whole host of Pharaoh was as easily vanquished as one man,—“the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.”

I could dwell with pleasure upon the beauties and excellencies of this divine composition, but there is ANOTHER SONG of deeper and dearer interest to *us under the Gospel*, a Song of triumph and thanksgiving for the greater deliverance wrought for us, in bringing us from the bondage of sin and Satan into the glorious liberty of the Sons of God, a deliverance wrought by the Lamb our Passover, the sprinkling of whose blood rightly applied will secure *life*—not to the body only, but to the precious and immortal soul. St. John says, in the Revelation, (xiv. 1—3.) “I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on

* Reading's Sermons, Vol. II. p. 96.

the Mount Sion, and with him an hundred and forty-four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: and they sung, as it were, a New Song before the throne, and before the beasts and the elders: and no man could learn that Song, but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth."

And, again, chapter XVI.,— he says, "I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous." "I saw, as it were, a sea of glass mingled with fire, and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his own image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the Song of Moses, the servant of God, and the Song of the Lamb, saying,

"Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of Saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest."

SERMON XVI.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.—EXODUS XV., &c.—LEVITICUS.
—NUMBERS I—XVI.

THE ISRAELITES IN THE WILDERNESS—THE REBELLION OF
KORAH.

NUMBERS xvi. 7.

Ye take too much upon you, ye sons of Levi.

IN my discourse on Easter Sunday, I considered the circumstances of the tenth and last plague which God inflicted upon the Egyptians, the death of the first-born, together with the appointment of the Passover and the feast of unleavened bread, the departure of the Israelites, Pharaoh and all his army pursuing them and overtaking them at the Red Sea, God's dividing the sea for the Israelites to pass through, Pharaoh's following them, the safe passage of the Israelites, and the destruction of every one of the Egyptians by the return of the billows upon them, and the triumphal song of the Israelites upon the occasion,—which brought us to the end of the 21st verse of the XVth chapter, from which we begin to-day.

No more Sunday Lessons are taken from the book of Exodus, nor any from Leviticus, nor from the book of Numbers, till we come to the XVIth chapter. But, where there is service in the church on

Easter Monday and Tuesday—as there ought to be in all churches—then, on Easter Monday, in the morning, the XVIth chapter of Exodus is the First Lesson, which gives an account of the Israelites murmuring for food, and manna being sent, rained down from heaven, and was continued to them duly every morning for forty years together, during their journey in the wilderness, only that, on the sixth day, a double portion was given them to serve on the sabbath, that no work might be done on that day. Quails also were given them to afford them flesh. It seems that quails were sent to them at two different times, the first, mentioned, here, Exod. xvi. 12, 13., in the year before Christ 1491, and which were for one day only. The second time, related in Numbers xi. (4, 13, 18—23, 31—33.,) and alluded to in Psalm cv. 40., was at Kibroth-Hattaavah, in the following year, and they lasted for a month. Both occurrences happened in the spring of the year, when the quails *migrate*, that is, pass from Asia into Europe; God, by his miraculous power, so collecting and directing them, that they fell in, and about, the camp, in prodigious numbers; when they were, no doubt, in some way collected, and dressed, and preserved.

The XVIIth chapter is appointed for Easter-Monday evening service, which gives an account of the Israelites murmuring for want of water, and God causing it to flow miraculously out of a rock,—also, an account of the Amalekites attacking them, and being repulsed and conquered, and *that* more by the prevailing prayers of Moses, than by the weapons of Joshua.

In the XVIIIth chapter, Jethro and his daughter, the wife of Moses, and their two sons visit Moses.

In the XIXth we have the approach of the Israelites to mount Sinai, and God's covenant with them there; the directions given to Moses and the people about preparing themselves; and the awful appearance of God upon the mountain when he delivered the moral Law. This is given in the XXth chapter, which is the first Lesson, in the morning, on Easter Tuesday: but, as the account of the giving of the Law is repeated in the IVth and Vth chapters of the book of Deuteronomy, which are the Lessons for the third Sunday after Easter, I shall say nothing about it now.

The XXIst, XXIIId, and XXIIIId chapters give various excellent political laws of God, which the time will not allow us to dwell on—you will read them, and all I pass over, I hope, at your own houses.—In the XXIVth chapter is the account of Moses being called up into the mount, when the people promise obedience, and the glory of God appeared.

The XXVth to the end of the XXXIst chapter, contains God's directions to Moses respecting the making of the tabernacle and its furniture, the separation of Aaron and his sons for the priests' office, the sacrifices, and God's giving to Moses the two tables of testimony written with his own hand.

But, when Moses descended with these, he found the people (as we read in the XXXIIId chapter, which is the lesson for the afternoon of Easter Tuesday) worshipping a golden calf, which—wonderful and horrible to say!—they had prevailed upon Aaron to make, under pretence that they did not know what was become of Moses, who tarried forty days in the mount with God. God, by Moses, ordered an instant and exemplary judgment to be executed upon the idolaters, and the children of Levi slew

about three thousand of the worst, by which they brought a blessing upon themselves, repealing the curse which Jacob, at his death, pronounced upon them, as I noticed in a former discourse.

God would have thrown off the people from being his, and made a great nation from Moses; but Moses intercedes for them, and obtains God's forgiveness.

In the XXXIVth chapter the two Tables are renewed, not by the finger of God, but by Moses, with which he retires, his countenance shining with the divine lustre. And, the XXXVth chapter, to the end of the IXth of Leviticus, is an account of the erecting the tabernacle, and consecrating Aaron and his sons to the priesthood.

This is all that I must say on this important and highly-interesting book of Exodus; except that there is one consideration which so nearly concerns us all, that I am unwilling to pass it over without saying a few words upon it. In the XVth chapter, and at the 22d verse, we read, that, after all the wonders and mercies which God had shewn to the Israelites, and particularly after their passage through the Red Sea, and the total destruction of their enemies, "Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea; and they went out into the wilderness of Shur: and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water. And, when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter." This was a *trial* to the Israelites. God, no doubt, intended it as such. After all these instances of his power and his goodness, he wants to see what effect they have had upon them; or, rather, he wants to shew them to themselves. What do the Israelites do? Do they *wait* patiently, trusting that God will, in his own good time, relieve their necessities? or,

do they use *means*, and endeavour to render it fit for use? or do they apply to Moses to intercede with God, and do they apply to God themselves by humble and earnest prayer? No, “the people murmured against Moses,” which was murmuring against God, whose servant he was, “saying, What shall we drink?” Moses, however, “cried unto the Lord: and the Lord shewed him a tree, which, when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet:” the Lord only can sweeten to us all the bitternesses of life: the Tree of Life, cast by *faith* into the bitterest waters, will render them pure as the river of God. The famous eastern philosopher Lockman, while a slave, being presented by his master with a bitter melon, immediately ate it all. “How was it possible,” said his master, “for you to eat so nauseous a fruit?” He replied, “I have received so many favours from you, that it is no wonder I should, once in my life, eat a bitter melon from your hand.” This generous answer of the slave affected the master to such a degree, that he immediately gave him his liberty. The pious Bishop Horne remarks, on this story, “With such sentiments should man receive his portion of sufferings at the hand of God*.” And God “there made a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them, and said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases,” none of these plagues, “upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee.”

* Essays and Thoughts, Article *Lockman*.

We, now, proceed to the book of *Leviticus*, from which, as I have already stated, no Sunday Lessons are taken; but this is the less to be regretted, as we shall have occasion to consider especially its *spiritual meaning* when we come to treat of the Epistle to the Hebrews. An excellent writer says of *Leviticus*, that it “is the *Gospel* of the Old Testament, and is the same with that in the New, only delivered in a darker manner: in types, in shadows, and ceremonies. The Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world is the substance of all that is here taught and done.—The priesthood of Aaron, the tabernacle, and its furniture, the altar and the sacrifices, were all shadows of better things to come, even of Christ and redemption. Compare the Epistle to the Hebrews with this book, and the whole will be explained, and all will lead you to *Christ crucified*. All the offices of Christ, and all the benefits of his redemption, are here set forth in types and shadows: some set forth his spotless character: some his atonement, and his taking away of sin: and others shew how he pardons, purifies, and saves his people. There is not one thing that Christ is to his church, but is taught by something or other in the book of *Leviticus*. We read here of a great variety of sacrifices, and we should understand in what respect each of them represented the Redeemer: how they were offered up, and the benefits derived from them*.” Mr. Boyle observes, “The ceremonial law, with all its mystic rites, like the manger to the shepherds, holds forth, wrapped in his swaddling-clothes, the infant Jesus †.”

The book is called *Leviticus*,—not because it treats

* Jones's Script. Direct.

† Bickersteth's Help, p. 30.

of the ministry of the *Levites*, strictly so called, (of which we have a fuller account in the book of Numbers) but, because it principally contains the laws concerning the religion of the Israelites, which chiefly consisted of various sacrifices; the charge of which was committed to “Aaron the Levite” (as he is called Exod. iv. 14.) and to his sons, who alone held the priestly office in the tribe of Levi; which St. Paul, therefore, calls (Heb. vii. 11.) a “Levitical priesthood.” The author of this book, it is universally admitted, was Moses: and it is cited as his production in several books of Scripture. By comparing Exodus xl. 17, with Numbers i. 1, we learn that this book contains the history of *one month*, namely, from the setting up of the tabernacle, to the numbering of the people who were fit for war; that is, from the beginning of the second year after the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt, to the beginning of the second month of the same year; which was in the year of the world 2514, and before Christ 1490*.

The Book of *Numbers* is so called because it contains an account of the *numbers* of the Israelites, when they were *numbered* according to their tribes, as related in the Ist, the IIIrd, and XXVIth chapters. It appears, from chapter XXXVI, 13, to have been written by Moses in the plains of Moab. Besides the numbering and marshalling of the Israelites for their journey, several laws, in addition to those delivered in Exodus and Leviticus, and, likewise, several remarkable events, are recorded. The space of time which the history contains is from the beginning of the second month of the *second* year after

* Horne's Crit. Introd. Vol. IV. p. 12.

their departure from Egypt, to the beginning of the eleventh month of the fortieth year of their journeyings, that is a space of 38 years, and nine, or ten, months. (Compare Numb. i. 1. and xxvi. 13. with Deut. i. 3.) Most of the transactions here recorded took place in the second and thirty-eighth years: the dates of the facts related in the middle of the book cannot be precisely determined.

The Ist and IInd chapters contain an account of the numbers of the Israelites, and the marshalling of them into a regular camp, each tribe by itself, under its own captain or chief, distinguished by its own peculiar standard, and occupying a particular place in respect to the tabernacle; and it is computed that this camp, containing six hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty men able to go out to war, together with the Levites, and women and children, and the mixed multitude from Egypt, amounting in all to, from between fifteen hundred thousand to two millions, must have occupied a square of at least twelve miles; [so that, to have travelled through the camp, would have been as far as from hence to Cambridge in a straight line.]

The IIIrd and IVth chapters contain an account of the numbering of the Levites, the appointing of them to the sacred office and to their various services in the tabernacle.

From the Vth to the Xth chapter, both included, is an account of the institution of various ceremonies of the law.

From the XIth to the XXIst chapters, both included, is the history of their journey from mount Sinai to the land of Moab, which may be described and distinguished by their *eight* remarkable *murmur-*

ings in the way ; every one of which was visited with severe chastisement, namely,

1. On account of the length of the way ; which was punished by fire at Tebarah. (xi. 1—4.)

2. Their murmuring for flesh and loathing of manna ; which was punished by the sending of quails and a pestilence. (xi. 5—35.)

3. The murmuring of Aaron and Miriam at Moses ; for which Miriam was smitten with a leprosy. (xii.)

4. The murmuring of the people at Kadesh, in consequence of the unfavourable report of the spies, who had been sent to explore the promised land ; for which those of the spies who had brought an evil report died of the plague, and the murmuring congregation were deprived of seeing the promised land ; and which was the occasion of the Israelites wandering so long in the wilderness, until the whole of that generation, that is, all who were twenty years old and upwards, was destroyed. (xiii. xiv.) In chapter XV. some ordinances are given for conducting the worship of Jehovah when they should come into the land of Canaan.

5. 6. The XVIth ch. which was the first Lesson at this morning's service, contains an account of *two* of these murmurings, namely, the murmurings and rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and their followers, with their punishment ; and the murmuring of the people against Moses and Aaron, on account of the preceding judgment and punishment. In considering *these* I shall employ the remainder of this discourse.

The chapter begins with informing us, “ Now Korah the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi,” and, therefore, the cousin of Moses and

Aaron, and father of Assir, Elkanah, and Abiasaph ; “ and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men, and they rose up before Moses ; with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown ; and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them : wherefore, then, lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord ?”

We wonder at Pharaoh and the Egyptians, and their hardness of heart amid all the messages of God and the plagues and judgments which he inflicted on them ; but the perverseness and stubbornness of the Israelites was, perhaps, as great, or greater, inasmuch as the plagues were inflicted upon the Egyptians for their sakes, and they had judgments inflicted upon themselves for their rebellions ; but these were mixed with so many wonders, deliverances, and mercies, that they had only to consider that, if they would obey, God would protect and bless. Moses and Aaron had been especially commissioned by God, and had given ample proof of this by the miracles which they had performed and the things which they had foretold : and God had given them, now, a fresh commission, by his appearing to Moses on the Mount, and his appointing Aaron and his sons to the priesthood, and the Levites to the service of the tabernacle ; but an inferior office, however honourable, will never satisfy discontent, pride and ambition, so the sons of Reuben contend that they, as the elder branch, should have had the chief civil government, and Korah maintained that he had as good a right

as Aaron to the priesthood. Of On we do not hear any thing more, so that, probably, he thought better of it, and repented, and desisted, and did not perish with the other rebels.

Moses replied, that they were too arrogant to find fault with the appointments of God, and that to-morrow the Lord would shew whom he allowed to officiate in the priesthood. He desired Korah and his two hundred and fifty accomplices, to appear with their censers full of incense, on that occasion, to stand the trial, and retorted the charge upon them, “Ye take too much upon you, ye sons of Levi.” Korah and his company assembled on the morrow, together with a great body of the people, to rail on Moses and Aaron, or, at least, to witness God’s acceptance of their incense. From a bright cloud hovering over the tabernacle, God ordered Moses and Aaron to separate themselves from the assembly, that he might destroy them in an instant. Moses and Aaron begged, that he would not destroy the whole congregation for the sin of a few, who had stirred them up. The Lord granted their request, and directed them to order the congregation to flee, as fast as they could, from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. We have, before, seen the *sea* divide to let Israel through, and the waters stand as a wall upon their right hand and upon their left, till they were passed through, and then they closed and swallowed up the Egyptians: now the solid earth heaves like the waters, and parts asunder to swallow up Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, their families and their tents; meanwhile a fire from God consumes the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense along with Korah. Such are the fruits of murmuring and rebellion!

Yet, strange! horrible to relate! “On the morrow, *all* the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, *ye* have killed the people of the Lord. And it came to pass, when the congregation was gathered against Moses and against Aaron, that they looked towards the tabernacle of the congregation: and, behold, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the Lord appeared. And Moses and Aaron came before the tabernacle of the congregation. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Get you up from among this congregation, that I may consume them as in a moment. And they fell upon their faces. And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly unto the congregation and make an atonement for them: for there is wrath gone out from the Lord; the plague is begun,” the people were dying by thousands of the pestilence. “And Aaron took, as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the congregation; and, behold, the plague was begun among the people: and he put on incense, and made an atonement for the people. And he stood between the dead and the living; and the plague was stayed. Now, they that died in the plague were fourteen thousand and seven hundred, beside them that died about the matter of Korah. And Aaron returned unto Moses, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and the plague was stayed.”

The short remaining time will allow me only to offer you a few remarks upon *two* points which seem particularly to claim our attention; namely upon what is called by St. Jude (verse 11.) “the gainsaying of Core,” a sin, in the Christian Church, similar

to that of Korah and his associates in the Israelitish ; and upon the intercession of Aaron when the plague was raging in the camp of Israel.

1. We of the Established Church hold, that, as there were *three* orders of men appointed to officiate in the tabernacle and temple, under the law, namely, the high priest, the priests and the Levites ; so, in the Christian Church, under the Gospel,—which was to have succeeded to the Jewish—had Christ's intention been fulfilled—silently and quietly—Christ and his apostles have appointed *three* orders of men, or clergy, namely, bishops, priests and deacons, to officiate ; that is, to offer up, or lead, the devotions of the congregation, to declare and expound the word of God, and to administer the holy sacraments of Baptism and the Supper of the Lord ; and none but those who are appointed to this, that is by the laying on of the hands of the bishop, derived in succession from the apostles and Christ, can perform these duties lawfully and effectually. The *proof* of this it will be my duty to lay before you when we come to the New Testament. Now, if this be the case,—and we think,—and *that*, we are persuaded, on good ground,—that it is so—it follows of course, that, all those who undertake the ministry in any other way, and all who separate from the episcopal Church to any other society, are guilty of a sin similar to “ the gainsaying of Core.” If there is a sin similar to Korah's, there must be an appointment and authority similar to that of Aaron and his sons ; and the question is, *where*, and by *what means*, is this ? God forbid that I should say any thing harsh, or uncharitable, or false—but I think it to be so ; and I would speak it in the way of friendly caution and warning, in Christian charity, and according to the duties of my office.

We are told, that *we* “take too much upon ourselves” in such a claim; and we retort the charge, “*Ye* take too much upon *you*.”

2. On the *second* point, the mediation of Aaron, we observe, that, as God had evidently appointed Aaron to the office of high priest, to offer sacrifice and incense, so, when his right and title to this office is disputed, God determines to give farther and distinguished proof of the honour and efficacy of his office. God sends a raging pestilence among them, and the Israelites fall dead by thousands; but Aaron runs in, with his censer smoking, and the plague is stayed; on one side all is *death*, on the other *life*. Behold, then, the *atonement* of Aaron, (verse 46.) behold the *intercessor* and *mediator*, and acknowledge his divine commission established.

And, do we not behold in *him* a lively *type* of the blessed Jesus, who is, as St. Paul states, (Heb. ii. 17.) “a merciful and faithful High Priest, in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people?” Does not He, while the pestilence of *sin* is raging in the world at large, or in the bodies of individuals, stand between us and sin with the incense of his intercession, and the offering of his blood, and make an atonement, and stay the plague, and death eternal, to all who have a lively faith in Him? “He is able to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.” (Heb. vii. 25.)

SERMON XVII.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER—NUMBERS XVII—XXV.

AARON'S ROD,—THE BRAZEN SERPENT,—BALAAM, THE FALSE
PROPHET.

NUMBERS XXIII. 8.

*How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy
whom the Lord hath not defied?*

IN my last Discourse, in considering the book of Numbers, I stated that, from the XIth to the XXIst chapter, both included, is the history of the journeying of the Israelites from Mount Sinai to the land of Moab, which may be described and distinguished by *eight* remarkable murmurings in the way, every one of which was visited with a severe chastisement. The first six of these I noticed, and dwelt, at some length, upon the XVIth chapter, the first lesson at the morning service, which contained the account of the rebellion, or gainsaying, of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, their being swallowed up in consequence, by the earth opening upon them, and again closing,—the murmuring of the congregation, the next day, against Moses and Aaron, accusing *them* of having done this,—God's sending a plague to punish them, and Aaron running in, with his censer, as a Mediator, with an atonement, and stay-

ing the plague,—an emblem, or type, of the mediation of Christ amidst the pestilence of sin.

We begin, then, to-day, with the XVIIth chapter, which contains another remarkable proof, or confirmation, which God was pleased to give of the priesthood of Aaron. The princes of each tribe of Israel were ordered to bring their rods made of almond tree, and Aaron his, and each to write his name upon his rod, and to lay them in the tabernacle before the Lord; and, the next morning, the rods of the princes were found as before, but Aaron's "was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms and yielded almonds," and these did not wither again, but flourished continually, and the rod was laid up in the ark: it continued at least till the destruction of the temple, and the carrying of the Israelites into captivity in Babylon.

The XVIIIth chapter contains some directions concerning the dignity and superiority of the priestly office over that of the Levites, and respecting the maintenance of both, together with,—in the XIXth chapter,—regulations concerning the water of separation made with the ashes of a red cow.

The XXth chapter gives an account of the death of Miriam, and of the seventh murmuring; which was a second murmuring of the congregation in the desert of Zin for water; the unbelief of Moses; the Edomites refusing to let the Israelites pass through their land to Canaan; and the ascent of Moses and Aaron and Eleazar into Mount Hor, where the priestly garments were taken from Aaron by Moses, who *invested* Eleazar with them, and Aaron died, and Eleazar succeeded as high priest.

Of the eighth murmuring we have an account in the XXIst chapter, when the Israelites murmured

on account of the length of the way, the light bread, or manna, and the want of water; when God sent fiery serpents among them, “and they bit the people, and much people of Israel died. Therefore the people came unto Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against thee, pray unto the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole: and it came to pass, that, if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.”

Our blessed Lord has himself informed us,—John iii. 14—16, that this serpent was a type of *himself*, that is of himself, when, upon the cross, he represented the old serpent, or sin, for which he suffered, to free us from the power of Satan and sin, to give us life: “as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.” And St. Peter says,—1 Ep. ii. 24,—that he “bore our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness*.”

The remainder of this chapter, from the 10th verse, gives an account of the farther journeyings of the Israelites, and their application to Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og, the king of Bashan, for leave

* See this subject treated again in the 63d Sermon.

to pass through their country, which they refused, and went out with their armies and opposed them, and were destroyed.

“ And the children of Israel set forward,—chapter XXII—and pitched in the plains of Moab, on this side Jordan, by Jericho. And Balak, the son of Zippor, saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. And Moab was sore afraid of the people, because they were many: and Moab was distressed because of the children of Israel. And Moab said unto the elders of Midian, Now shall this company lick up all that are round about us, as the ox licketh up the grass of the field. And Balak, the son of Zippor, was king of the Moabites at that time. He sent messengers, therefore, unto Balaam, the son of Beor, to Pethor, which is by the river of the land of the children of his people, to call him, saying, Behold there is a people come out of Egypt: behold, they cover the face of the earth, and they abide over against me. Come, now, therefore, I pray thee, *curse* me this people, for they are too mighty for me: peradventure I shall prevail, that we may smite them, and that I may drive them out of the land: for I wot, that he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed. And the elders of Moab, and the elders of Midian, departed with the rewards of divination in their hand; and they came unto Balaam, and spake unto him the words of Balak. And he said unto them, Lodge here this night, and I will bring you word again, as the Lord shall speak unto me: And the princes of Moab abode with Balaam, and God came unto Balaam, and said, What men are these with thee?”

Some expositors have supposed, from Balaam's expression, “ as the Lord shall speak unto me,” and

from God's coming unto Balaam, that he was a worshipper and prophet of the true God, but was led away, by his covetousness, to wish to take in hand, for Balak, this matter against Israel, though the people of the true God. But, had Balaam been a believer in, and worshipper of, the one true God, the God of Israel, he would not, surely, have undertaken the matter; nor offered sacrifices with Balak to Baal-Peor, and have drawn Israel, afterwards, into the worship of Baal-Peor. The case is, that it is known, from history, that, at that time, at Pethor, was a temple of Baal-Peor, and a college of his prophets, of which Balaam was, probably, the chief; and where the worship of the *ass* was carried on, an idolatry not very uncommon in those parts, and practised, also, in Greece*. Balaam, probably, was an enchanter and diviner, and a magician and sorcerer, the Jannes or Jambres of Edom, and made high pretensions, for the sake of exalting and enriching himself; and might have been, what is called *lucky* in some of his *cursings*; that is, he might have cursed, and God might have permitted those whom he cursed to have been vanquished, or otherwise injured, and this would be attributed to *his* power: it was customary, in those days, for the priests and prophets of the false gods to pronounce formal curses. As to Balaam's saying, "as the Lord shall speak unto me," he might even *pretend* to have communication with the God of Israel; or he might only intend to consult, that is pretend to consult, *Baal*, which means, likewise, *Lord*. And God's actually coming to him is no more a proof of his

* See Bryant's "Observations upon some Passages in Scripture, which the Enemies to Religion have thought most obnoxious, and attended with Difficulties not to be surmounted." p. 6, 37, &c.

being a worshipper of God, than God's coming to Abimelech, in the case of Abraham,—Gen. xx. 3,—or his coming to Laban, in behalf of Jacob—Gen. xxxi. 24,—or, afterwards, to Nebuchadnezzar,—Daniel ii.;—was a proof that *they* were worshippers of the true God.

I suppose, then, that Balaam was a priest and prophet of Baal-Peor; and, on the messengers of Balak coming to him for this purpose, “God came unto Balaam,” in some way which manifested his glory and power, and made it evident who he was, and said, What men are these with thee? A reproof, or rebuke, to him, for entertaining at all persons, who came on such an errand, to want him to curse the people, in whose behalf the mighty Jehovah had shewn such signs and wonders, and against whom the gods of Egypt had no power. “And Balaam said unto God, Balak, the son of Zippor, king of Moab, hath sent unto me, saying, Behold there is a people come out of Egypt, which covereth the face of the earth: come, now, curse me them; peradventure I shall be able to overcome them, and drive them out. And God said unto Balaam, Thou shalt *not* go with them: thou shalt *not* curse the people; for they are blessed.” Balaam was awed by this appearance of God to him, “And Balaam rose up, in the morning, and said unto the princes of Balak, Get you into your land: for the Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you.” This was true; but it was not the whole truth, he ought to have said, that Jehovah, the God of Israel, had appeared to him, and had said that they were *blessed*. The messengers returned; but Balak was unwilling to be refused, and sent more honourable messengers, and greater rewards, and higher promises. This was

tempting to a covetous and ambitious mind: yet, Balaam, conscious that God was concerned in this business, “ answered and said unto the servants of Balak, If Balak would give me his house-full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less, or more. Now, therefore, I pray you, tarry ye, also, here this night, that I may know what the Lord will say unto me more.” This was an affront to God, after having once received his answer, to suppose that the unchangeable God should vary from it. But what Balaam wanted was his *permission*, not his *approbation*. “ And God came unto Balaam at night, and said unto him, If the men come to call thee, rise up, and go with them; but, yet, the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do.” By which I understand God as saying, “ I have already given you my answer, that you shall *not* go, you shall *not* curse the people, for they are *blessed*. But you are not satisfied with this, you still want to go. Go, then; but it shall not answer your purpose. You had better have remained quietly at home; for, in this journey, so far from its turning to your honour and profit, you shall make a public exposure of yourself and Moab; and, instead of cursing, shall bless my people in the face of all Moab and Midian, and render them now and to future times, still more illustrious.”

“ And Balaam rose up in the morning, and saddled his ass, and went with the princes of Moab.” The particulars of his journey are well known, and we have not time to dwell upon them, the angel of God withstanding him, and the ass speaking and reproving him. I have already stated, that at Pethor, the ass was worshipped, and, consequently, held in great estimation; a golden figure of one was in the

temple, and was supposed, or feigned, to give oracular answers; and, probably, there were living animals held in great esteem, and especially that upon which the prophet was accustomed to ride; and, now, as St. Peter says,—2 Ep. ii. 16,—he is “rebuked,” even by his own oracle, miraculously speaking, “for his iniquity: The dumb ass, speaking with man’s voice, forbad the madness of the prophet.” Yet, still, blinded and hardened by covetousness, the prophet proceeded; and Balak went out to meet him, and made a feast for him and the princes.

“And it came to pass, on the morrow,”—xxii. 41.—“that Balak took Balaam, and brought him up in the high places of Baal, that, thence, he might see the utmost part of the people. And Balaam said unto Balak, Build me, here, seven altars, and prepare me, here, seven oxen and seven rams. And Balak did as Balaam had spoken; and Balak and Balaam offered, on every altar, a bullock and a ram.” Can it be said, now, that Balaam was a prophet and a worshipper of the true God? If he knew any thing about him, if he ever paid him any service, how much idolatry was there mingled with it! nay, how *small*, how *very small*, how next to *nothing*, was his true faith and practice! “And Balaam said unto Balak, stand by thy burnt-offering, and I will go; peradventure the Lord will come to meet me: and whatsoever he sheweth me I will tell thee. And he went to an high place.”

And, yet, do we never see any thing at all like this, even in these our days, and in our Christian country? What are our astrologers and fortune-tellers? Astrology is founded upon the heathen idolatry of Jupiter and Juno, and Mars and Venus, and Saturn and Mercury, and the other heathen deities; and, if

they are false gods, as we know they are, of course, astrology, and every thing depending on it, is false likewise *. And, yet, we see persons pretending to a knowledge of the true God, and professing to be Christians, to practise this ; and other persons, with the like professions, seeking to them.

“ And the Lord put a word in Balaam’s mouth, and said, Return unto Balak, and, thus, thou shalt speak. And he returned to him ; and, lo, he stood by his burnt-sacrifice, he, and all the princes of Moab.”

How magnificent and interesting is the scene now before us ! Let our imaginations picture to us the camp of Israel extended through the plains of Moab, with its two millions of people, occupying a square of twelve miles, with its tents and its standards, and the tabernacle with its cloudy pillar resting upon it, while, nearer to us, are the high places of Baal, with the king and princes of Moab and of Midian, standing by their altars and sacrifices, with their people waiting below ; all is expectation, and all anxiety to hear Balaam *curse* Israel :

“ And he took up his parable, and said, Balak, the king of Moab, hath brought me from Aram,” or, rather, Edom, “ out of the mountains of the east, saying, Come, curse me Jacob, and come, defy Israel. How shall I curse, whom God hath *not* cursed ? or how shall I defy, whom the Lord hath *not* defied ?” It is not an uncommon thing, in these days, to hear wicked persons say, *curse you*, and *damn you*, and *I defy you*, and *God curse you*, and *God damn you*,

* In the third volume of Horne’s Introduction, is a very interesting chapter, (Part iii. chap. vi.) “ on the Corruptions of Religion by the Jews,” and especially the first section, “ On the Idolatry of the Jews,” in which the rise and progress of it is developed.

and, this, often, against the ministers and people of God, against the best persons. Let them consider the case of Balaam and Israel, and what Solomon says, in the book of Proverbs, (xxvi. 2.) that “the curse causeless shall not come.” And what David says of the ungodly person (Psalm cix. 16.), “His delight was in cursing, and it shall happen unto *him*: he loved not blessing, therefore shall it be far from him.”

But, to proceed with the unwilling blessing of Balaam:

“For, from the top of the rocks, I see him, and, from the hills, I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations. Who can count the dust of Jacob,”—the children of Jacob as incapable of being counted as the dust, “and the number of the fourth part of Israel?” He, then, exclaims, either by the spirit of God, or by a passing conviction in his own mind, assisted by the Holy Spirit, “Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end,” or, rather, it should be translated, my after-state*, or state in another world, “be like his.”

Balak was angry at Balaam’s blessing, instead of cursing, the people; but, thinking, that, if he might not curse the whole, he might curse a part, “Balak said unto him, Come, I pray thee, with me unto another place, from whence thou mayest see them: thou shalt see but the utmost part of them, and shalt not see them all; and curse me them from thence.” But, neither could the prophet curse a part of them. He pronounced, “He,” that is God, “hath not beheld

* See Peters’ *Critical Dissertation on the Book of Job*, p. 288, first edition, quoted in Venn’s *Mistakes in Religion Exposed*, ch. xix.

iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel." Not that Israel hath *not* been perverse, and done iniquity, but God had made a promise to Abraham respecting his seed, and he was pleased to *overlook* their transgressions however multiplied.

Neither the king of Moab, however, nor the prophet were to be put-by from their purpose, "Balak said unto Balaam, Come, I pray thee, I will bring thee unto another place: peradventure it will please God that thou mayest curse me them from thence. And Balak brought Balaam unto the top of Peor, that looketh towards Jeshimon." Another sacrifice was offered, "And, when Balaam saw that it pleased the Lord to bless Israel, he went not, as at other times, to look for enchantments, but he set his face towards the wilderness: and Balaam lift up his eyes, and he saw Israel abiding in their tents, according to their tribes; and the spirit of God came upon him:" when he uttered one of the most sublime prophecies ever delivered, and which you have heard at this morning's service, and, therefore, I must not recite it again now, however delightful it may be. Many of the great events foretold, did not take place till many ages afterwards; and, before they were all completed, there were translations made of the sacred history: one of which was near three hundred years before the fulfilment, and another still more early. Concerning this there can be no doubt; so that we have the best authority for it, and the strongest proof that any past fact can demand*. Such is that prophecy of the Messiah, of Christ, (at verse 17.) "I shall see him,—but not now: I shall behold him,—but not nigh: there shall come a Star

* Bryant's Observations, p. 67.

out of Jacob,—and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.” The latter part of which, we are told, by a learned and excellent expositor, should be translated, “He shall ruin the magicians of Moab, those high-priests of Baal-Peor.” And, that, by the children of *Sheth*, is not meant the posterity of the patriarch, the son of Adam; but there was a heathen deity of the name of Sheth, the same as Baal-Peor; and it means all his worshippers*. And, on the words, “I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him, but not nigh,” the late excellent Mr. Robinson says, in his *Scripture Characters* †, they “might intimate, that his appearance was far removed, and that he should see him only by the spirit of prophecy. But it may also refer to the second advent of the Saviour, when indeed both Balaam and every despiser of his grace “shall see him” in his glory,—“shall behold him, but not nigh:” for they shall be driven out from him with shame and confusion, and “be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power ‡.”

One wishes that we could conclude this subject with the last verse of the XXIVth chapter, “And Balaam rose up, and went, and returned to his place: and Balak, also, went his way.”

But the XXVth chapter gives an account of the Israelites bringing a curse and plague upon themselves by sinning. It appears, from the XXXIst chapter, and the 16th verse, that, “through the counsel of Balaam,” the women of Moab and of

* Bryant's Observations, p. 71—79.

† Vol. I. p. 481.

‡ See also Horne's Introd. Vol. IV. p. 17.

Midian went into the camp of Israel, and seduced the men into the worship of Baal-Peor; the consequence of which was, that "Moses said unto the judges of Israel, (xxv. 5,) Slay ye every one his men that were joined unto Baal-Peor." But, it is supposed, that the judges being slack in their duty, God sent a pestilence amongst them, till Phineas*, by an act of zeal, slew two of the most shameless transgressors, which God accepted as an atonement, and stayed the plague; but not till twenty-four thousand had perished. St. Paul—1 Cor. x. 8—says twenty-*three* thousand, that is, probably, twenty-three thousand by the plague, and one thousand by the hands of the judges. Balaam, however, did not long triumph in this success over the Israelites, for we read,—in the XXXIst chapter,—that "the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites—of every tribe a thousand, throughout all the tribes of Israel, shall ye send to the war,—and Phineas the son of Eleazar the priest, with the holy instruments, and the trumpets to blow, in his hand. And they warred against the Midianites, and they slew all the males, and they slew the kings of Midian, and Balaam, also, the son of Beor, they slew with the sword." (verse 1—8.)

Such was the end of Balaam, but *not* "the death of the *righteous*." St. Peter and St. Jude, in their epistles, and St. John, in the Revelation, all speak of him as a warning to others. St. Peter, 2 Ep. ii. 15, 17, mentions him as loving "the wages of unrighteousness," and as one to whom the mist of

* For a very able defence of this act of Phineas, see Reading's XXXVIIIth Sermon, Vol. II. p. 153.

darkness is reserved for ever." St. Jude, verse 11, 13, speaks of those who have "run greedily after the error of Balaam for reward;" and "to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever." And St. John—Rev. ii. 1, 12—14.—is ordered by Him "who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks," and "hath the sharp sword with two edges," to write "to the angel of the church in Pergamos," that, though he "held fast his name, and had not denied his faith," yet he had "a few things against him, because he had there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to commit idolatry." And he, who shall *now*, in any way, cast a stumbling block before any of the children of God, or, for the sake of gain, shall do any thing to their prejudice, is in the way of Balaam, and loves the wages of unrighteousness.

"But, ye, beloved"—to conclude in the words of St. Jude—"But, ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

"Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,

"To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen." (verses 20, 21, 24, 25.)

SERMON XVIII.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.—NUMBERS XXVI.—DEUTERONOMY V.

THE DAUGHTERS OF ZELOPHEHAD,—THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS,
—DIVISION OF THE LAND OF CANAAN,—THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY,—THE GIVING OF THE LAW.

DEUTERONOMY IV. 9.

Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life ; but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons.

THE history of Balaam, his loving the wages of unrighteousness, and his malice against the children of Israel, was the principal subject of our meditations on Sunday last, and brought us to the end of the xxvth chapter of the book of Numbers. We begin, therefore, at the XXVIth chapter to-day, which gives an account of another numbering of the Israelites. That given in the Ist chapter was thirty-eight years before ; after which, on their unbelief and refusing to go up and take possession of the promised land, on account of the fear inspired into them by the spies, God said, that none of them,—that is none who were twenty years old and upwards,—should enter into it, except Caleb and Joshua, who gave a true account of the land, and would have had them gone up. God, therefore, detained them in the wil-

derness for thirty-eight years longer, till that generation should die off, and another succeed ; and, on numbering them again, it appeared that there were 601,730, which was only 61,020 less than before, so wonderfully had God's providence presided over them, and so faithfully had he kept his promise to the patriarch, that he would multiply them as the stars of heaven. And it is not unworthy of remark, that this number is besides those who perished in the gainsaying of Korah, to the number of 15,000, or more, and the 24,000 who perished in the matter of Baal-Peor : so that, those who thus were smitten, were, either of the old stock, who murmured on the report of the spies, or, else, an addition to the increase here stated.

The XXVIIth chapter gives an account of the petition of the daughters of Zelophehad for an inheritance among their tribe ; which was granted them, with this restriction, afterwards, (xxxvi.) that they should marry only in their own tribe. In this chapter, too, Moses, having notice given him of his death, prays for a successor, and Joshua is appointed.

Chapter XXVIII gives the command of God for the observance of the offerings, and for the continual burnt-offering.

The XXIXth chapter contains the orders for the offerings at divers feasts, the feast of trumpets, the day of humiliation, and the eight days of the feast of tabernacles. The feast of trumpets was held on the first day of the month Tisri, which was the first month of the civil year of the Hebrews. The feast had its name from the blowing of trumpets, with more than usual solemnity. The Scriptures nowhere give the *reason* for this festival, and, on that account, the learned are very much divided about it ; but the

most general opinion is, that it was designed as a commemoration of the creation of the world *, which is supposed to have taken place at this season of the year. So, this month, which was the seventh of their sacred, or ecclesiastical year, was, not only in ancient times, but is, still, reckoned by the Jews the first month of their civil year. Thus the Feast of Trumpets was the New-year's-day, on which the people were solemnly called upon to rejoice in a grateful recollection of the various blessings and mercies which God had graciously granted them through the last year; as well as to beg his blessing for the ensuing year, which was partly the intention of the sacrifices offered on this day †.

The XXXth chapter treats of the obligation of vows.

The XXXIst contains God's order to Moses, for the children of Israel to avenge themselves on the Midianites, for having seduced them into idolatry, which I noticed in my discourse on Sunday last, so far as related to the death of Balaam. They were ordered to destroy all the males, even the male chil-

* If the Feast of Trumpets was instituted in commemoration of the creation of the world, might it not, also, have a *prospective view* to that *new creation*, when “the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed,”—“when this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality;”—and “Death” shall be “swallowed up in victory?”

The effect of the sounding of the trumpets among the Jews, when the camp removed, in war, and at their festivals, and at the new moon, must have been very grand and awful. The author never hears a trumpet but with the most animating and awful sensations. And the most solemn and awful piece of music with which he is acquainted is the *Air of The trumpet shall sound*, in the third part of the Oratorio of THE MESSIAH.

† Jones's Scripture Antiquities, p. 50.

dren, and the women who had been made the instruments of seducing them; but to spare the female children, and bring them up as slaves, or domestic servants; and which, when we consider the humane treatment which they were ordered to shew to their slaves, and that they were permitted even to marry them, was a merciful order for them.

In the XXXIId chapter we have the proposal of the Reubenites and Gadites to settle on that side of Jordan,—the eastern side,—where they were now encamped; at which Moses was, at first, displeased; but they obviated his objections, by offering for the men of war to go with the rest, till they were settled, and Moses agreed to it. Particular mention is made of the two and forty journeys of the Israelites, and the order for destroying the Canaanites, in the XXXIIId chapter; and, in the XXXIVth chapter, the boundaries of the Holy Land are given, and the names of the men who should divide it.

The XXXVth chapter assigns eight and forty cities, amongst the other tribes, to the Levites, six of which were to be the *cities of refuge*: that is, when any one had slain another, he might fly to one of those cities, and be secure from the avenger, till such time as he could have a fair trial; and the laws respecting murder and manslaughter are laid down.

The XXXVIth chapter relates to the marriages of the daughters of Zelophehad, which I mentioned before: and this concludes the book of Numbers.

We proceed, then, to the book of *Deuteronomy*. This fifth book of Moses has its name from the title prefixed to it by the Greek translators, and is made out of two words, signifying *the second law* or *the law repeated*, because it contains a repetition of the law of God, given by Moses to the Israelites. From

comparing i. 5. with xxxiv. 1., it appears to have been written by Moses, in the plains of Moab, a short time before his death, and this circumstance will account for that affectionate earnestness with which he addresses the Israelites. The time which passes in this book, is, according to some, five weeks, and, according to others, two months, in the year of the world 2553, and before Christ 1451.

From the account of the death of Moses, given in the XXXIVth chapter of this book, and some words being put in, in the way of explanation, in other parts, it has been said, that Moses could not be the author of it. But the words of Moses evidently end with the XXXIIIrd chapter; and the XXXIVth was added to complete the history, the first eight verses, probably, immediately after his death, by his successor Joshua, the last four by some later writer, probably Samuel, or Ezra, or some other prophet. They were admitted by Ezra as authentic, and we have no reason to question this account. Another, and equally satisfactory, explanation of this difficulty is, that, what, *now*, forms the *last* chapter of Deuteronomy, was, *formerly*, the *first* of Joshua, but was removed thence, and joined to the former, by way of supplement. This opinion will not appear improbable, when it is considered, that sections and other divisions, as well as points and pauses, were invented long since these books were written, as I explained to you in the second of my Introductory Discourses: for, in those times, several books were connected together, and followed each other on the same roll. The beginning of one book might, therefore, be transferred to the end of another, and, in time, be considered as its real conclusion, as in the case of Deuteronomy; especially as this supplemental chap-

ter contains an account of the last transactions and death of the great author of the Pentateuch*.

Moses in the book of Deuteronomy, repeats to the Israelites, before he left them, the chief laws of God which had been given to them; that those, who were not born at the time when they were originally delivered, or were incapable of understanding them, might be instructed in these laws, and be excited to attend to them; and, consequently, be better prepared for the promised land upon which they were entering. With this view he reminds them of the various mercies which God had bestowed upon them and their forefathers, from their departure out of Egypt; the victories, which, by divine assistance, they had obtained over their enemies; their rebellion, ingratitude, and chastisements. The moral, ceremonial, and judicial laws are repeated with additions and explanations: and the people are urged to obedience in the most affectionate manner, from the consideration of the most endearing promises made to them by God, which he would assuredly perform, if they did not hinder his designs of mercy by their own wilful obstinacy. That no person might, afterwards, plead ignorance of the divine law, he commanded that it should be read to all the people at the end of every seventh year; and concluded his ministerial labours among the Israelites by a most admirable *ode*, or *song*, which he commanded every one to learn, and by giving his prophetic blessing to the twelve tribes†.

This book contains only one Prophecy concerning

* Horne's Introduction, Vol. IV. p. 20. † Ibid. p. 21.

the Messiah, namely chapter xviii. 15, 18, 19,—“The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet, from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me, unto Him ye shall hearken;”—which was fulfilled fifteen hundred years after it had been delivered, and is expressly applied to Jesus Christ, by St. Peter, in Acts iii. 22, 23, and by St. Stephen, Acts vii. 37. It, also, contains several very remarkable prophecies concerning the Israelites, some of which are fulfilled before our eyes. “These prophecies,” it has been justly remarked, “become more numerous and distinct towards the close of his life. His denunciations with respect to the future state of the Israelites; the sufferings, the dispersions, and the devastations to which they were to be subject; the prophetic blessings which he pronounced on the different tribes by name; the clear foresight which he had of the rapid victories of their invaders, and of the extreme miseries which they were to experience when besieged; his express predictions relating to the future condition of the Jews, which we see accomplished in the present day: all these circumstances, when united, bear ample testimony to the truth and authenticity of this sacred book, and present to our minds a memorable instance of the divine justice*.”

“The book of Deuteronomy,” says Dr. Adam Clarke, in his Commentary on the Bible, “and the Epistle to the Hebrews contain the best comment on the nature, design, and use of the law: the former may be considered as an evangelical commentary on the four preceding books, in which the spiritual re-

* Hewlett, quoted in Horne, Vol. IV. p. 22.

ference and signification of the different parts of the law are given, and given in such a manner as none could give, who had not a clear discovery of the glory which was to be revealed. It may be safely asserted that very few parts of the Old Testament Scriptures can be read with greater profit by the genuine Christian than the book of Deuteronomy*.”

In the Ist chapter, Moses, at the end of the fortieth year from their coming out of Egypt, briefly rehearses the story of God's promise, and his anger for their unbelief and disobedience. In the IId chapter, the story is continued, and the command is mentioned, that they were not to meddle with the Edomites, the Moabites, nor the Ammonites; but that Sihon the king of the Amorites, was to be subdued; and, in the IIId chapter, the account is given of the conquest of Og king of Bashan; and, at the 23d verse, Moses states how he besought the Lord to let him go into the promised land, which was not granted; but he was allowed to see it from a distance.

In the IVth chapter, (the first lesson at this morning's service) Moses, having recited the history of God's favours to them in the wilderness, and their sins and punishments, proceeds to exhort them to obedience.

When we were passing through the book of Exodus, and came to the xixth chapter, on the first Sunday after Easter, I expressed my regret, that *that* and the xxth chapter had not been appointed for Sunday Lessons; but said, that it the less signified, as we should have to consider the giving of the Law when we came to the book of Deuteronomy; and we shall,

* Horne's Introduction, Vol. IV. p. 24.

now, therefore, consider that part of Exodus in connection with our Lessons of this day.

In the XIXth chapter of Exodus, it is stated, that “In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt,” that is the third new moon, called by the Jews *Sivan*, and answering to the latter part of our May and the former part of June, they came “into the wilderness of Sinai”—“and there Israel camped before the mount.” It is generally thought to have been fifty days after they came out of Egypt; and, accordingly, the Feast of *Pentecost*, which signifies *fifty*, is observed in remembrance of this event. Our Whit-Sunday answers to it, and it was on that day that Christ sent the Holy Ghost, in the likeness of fiery tongues, upon the Apostles, which was the great means of spreading the Gospel to all nations. And a thick cloud appeared upon the mount, the token of God’s presence. And a barrier, or bound, was set round the mount, to prevent the people and the cattle from approaching too near. And the people were to be sanctified, and to wash their clothes, and to be ready against the third day.

“And it came to pass, on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount,” out of which, probably, the lightnings came,—“the mountain burned with fire unto the midst of heaven, with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness” (Deut. iv. 11.) —“and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud,”—that is, the Angel, by whose disposition (see Acts vii. 53.) the law was delivered, made a sound like a loud trumpet; “so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they

stood at the nether part of the mount. And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. And, when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder,"—(we are told that the Hebrew word used here is very forcible, and signifies, "when it exceeded itself,")—then "Moses spake," as mediator, "and God answered him by a voice," by plain, distinct words, so that the people might hear. And what a voice must this have been, that six hundred thousand men, besides women and children, and the mixed multitude, making towards two millions of people, should hear it so plainly! St. Paul tells us (Heb. xii. 26.) it shook the earth. No wonder it threw them into the greatest consternation. The people trembled before at the sound; but, now, "Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake." (Heb. xii. 21.)

Such were the magnificent and awful circumstances under which the Law was delivered; a Law so holy, and so entirely calculated for the good and happiness of mankind; and, yet, we live constantly in the violation of it.

In the second of my Discourses on Tithes, (which I have twice preached in this church) I stated, that "The Jewish Rabbies have said, that the law of Moses was merely a revival, or second appointment of the Patriarchal Religion, which had been from the first revealed to man." And that "The different particulars which we are able to collect from various parts of the Scriptures render this highly probable."

"That the nature of the Deity and the duties

owing to him by man were more fully revealed and better understood than in later times, there can be but little doubt, since God himself condescended to converse with man face to face." And, if God made himself known, as the One Almighty God, the Creator and preserver of heaven and earth, the Godhead consisting of three Persons, of course it was an affront to him, and a sin, to give the honour and worship due to him, to any other. "The observance of the *sabbath* was appointed from the beginning." (Gen. ii. 2, 3.)

"Marriage, likewise, was instituted in Paradise, (Gen. ii. 24.) and the duties of that state were more strongly enjoined than even under the law of Moses, since we find our Saviour saying to the Pharisees, (Matt. xix. 8.) that 'Moses, on account of the hardness of their hearts, had suffered them to put away their wives; but, *from the beginning* it was *not so*.' We find the patriarch Joseph considering a breach of this contract as a sin against God: (Gen. xxxix. 9.) and the history of Dinah (Gen. xxxiv. 7.) plainly shews, that the intercourse of the sexes without marriage was unlawful."

"The prohibition of *murder* we learn from the history of Cain and Abel, (Gen. iv. 11.) and from the recorded law given to Noah after the flood. (Gen. ix. 6.)"

"That *stealing* was unlawful we learn from Genesis xxxi. 19 and 20."

The same may be said of much of the ceremonial law. "We certainly find that *sacrifice* was very early instituted; probably, immediately on the transgression of our first parents," as I explained in my Sermon on the Fall of Man. And, "as a sacrifice

requires a *priest* to offer it, it is probable, that Adam was constituted a priest at that time*. From the account of Noah's entering into the ark with the animals, we collect, that the distinction of them into *clean* and *unclean* had already taken place. (Gen. vii. 2.)"

From the case of Abraham and Melchizedek, (Gen. xiv. 20.,) and the vow of Jacob, (Gen. xxviii. 22.,) we find, that the appointment of *tithes* had been made.

On comparing Genesis xxxviii. 8, with Deuteronomy xxxv. 5, we find, that the *law* respecting the younger brother raising up seed to the elder, in case of his dying without issue, was in *existence* in the time of Jacob.

This declaration of the Law, then, from mount Sinai, was, not so much the appointment of *new* laws and ordinances, as a public and awful promulgation of it to God's chosen and assembled people under circumstances calculated to impress them, and all who hear of them, with the greatest reverence and fear: "Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man." (Eccles. xii. 13.)

It was Moses' charge to the Israelites, "Ye shall not *add* unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye *diminish* aught from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you." (Deut. iv. 2.) Yet, in the time of our Lord, the Jews had both added to it, and diminished from it. In respect to the sabbath, they had made the observance of it so strict, that they objected even to the disciples gathering a few ears of corn, as they passed through a field on the sabbath-

* See Bp. Horne's Sermons, Vol. I. Sermon ii. p. 58.

day, (Matt. xii. 42.) and objected to our Lord's works of mercy in healing the sick. (Luke xiii. 14.) They considered the traditions of the elders of equal force with the commandments. In respect to the fifth commandment, our Lord says, "God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father, or his mother, It is a gift by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me, and honour not his father, or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition." (Matt. xv. 4—6.)

And, in his Sermon on the Mount, in the fifth chapter of St. Matthew, our Lord explained and expounded the Commandments, carrying them to the very *thoughts* and the *looks*: "Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For, verily, I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot, or one tittle, shall in no wise pass from the Law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do, and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

And, when he was asked by the lawyer, "Which is the *great* commandment in the Law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. *This* is the *first* and *great* commandment. And the *second* is *like* unto it, Thou shalt *love thy neighbour* as *thyself*. On these two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." (Matt. xxii.

36—40.) And, in the Sermon on the Mount, he compresses the duties of the second table into these few, but significant words, “All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the Law and the Prophets.” (Matt. vii. 12.)

St. Paul—Romans xiii. 10.—sums up all in *one word* and says “LOVE is the fulfilling of the Law,” and, again, 1 Tim. i. 5., “the end of the commandment is CHARITY out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.”

When the Israelites, at mount Sinai, Exodus xx. 18, 19., “saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and heard the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking,—they removed, and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak *thou* with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die.” Moses, accordingly, in the xviiiith chapter of Deuteronomy, the 15th to the 19th verse, both included—in the prophecy to which I have already alluded, promises: “The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet, from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me, unto him ye shall hearken; according to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horeb, in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And the Lord said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and I will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.”

Isaiah, speaking from God, represents this Prophet in language admirably descriptive of the blessed person intended,—xlii. 1—4,—“ Behold my servant, whom I uphold ; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth : I have put my Spirit upon him ; he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench : he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth : and the isles shall wait for his law.”

We know how tremendous is a storm of thunder and lightning, even in this our temperate climate, and in this our level country ;

The loosen'd aggravated roar,
Enlarging, deepening, mingling, peal on peal
Crush'd horrible, convulsing heaven and earth.

THOMSON'S SUMMER, l. 1131.

What must it have been in that country ! What must it have been, when the Almighty Jehovah intended to make the greatest display of his majesty and terror !!! Whenever *we* shall hear this awful voice of heaven, let us say to ourselves, not only “ It is the glorious God that maketh the thunder ! ” (Psalm xxix. 3.) but, “ It is the glorious God that delivered his Commandments from mount Sinai,” those Commandments of which we live in the continual violation. Think on this. Think on the blessed Jesus. He spake on earth without terrors. His terrors will be when he sentences the wicked to outer darkness and everlasting fire, for having rejected his mediation, and broken his commandments.

I conclude, then, in addressing the words of Moses to *you* : “ Behold, I have taught you statutes, and

judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me. Keep, therefore, and do them: for this is your wisdom and your understanding. Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life; but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons." (Deut. iv. 5, 6, 9.)

SERMON XIX.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.—DEUTERONOMY VI, VII.

THE USURPERS OF THE DEITY OF JEHOVAH.

DEUTERONOMY vi. 6, 7.

And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thy heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

THE portion of Scripture which we have to consider this day is only the two chapters which are the first Lessons at morning and evening service for the Sunday, the VIth and VIIth chapters of Deuteronomy. On Sunday last we had the account of the delivery of the Law from mount Sinai; and Moses, having repeated the Commandments in the Vth chapter, in the VIth proceeds to explain the first Commandment, and exhorts the Israelites to obedience. In the VIIth chapter the same subject is continued, and all communion with the nations is forbidden, for fear of their falling into idolatry.

At the 4th verse of the VIth chapter, the Prophet calls their attention to this important truth, “Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might:” and, then, follow the words which I have selected as my

text. And, on these words, we may ask ourselves, Do *we* hold the Lord our God, Jehovah, as *our* one Lord? Have *we* no other God beside Him? Do *we* love Him with all our heart, soul and might? And are *we* thus diligent to teach the knowledge of Him and his Commandments, and his dispensations to our children, and to all around us?

The answer, I fear, must be, that we *do not*. The conduct of the world in general is quite the contrary, and the customs of the world are very unfavourable to it. With the religion of the one true God and the Gospel of Jesus Christ *professed* and publicly supported in the nation, and with a church, or temple, in every parish for the carrying on of the worship of the one true God, the Creator and Preserver of the earth, and the Redeemer from sin and death,—it is astonishing how *little* he is *really confessed* and *worshipped* and *loved*. These are positions which require to be *proved*, and I will lay the proof before you. I do not say, that I shall show you a city, like that of Lystra,—Acts xiv.,—which has an image and temple of Jupiter, and priests, who bring oxen and garlands, and sacrifice: but I will give you instances, in which the heathen deities occupy the place of Jehovah, and have more love and worship shewn them.

What is called a *classical education*, (to which, by the custom of the world, at least all who are of the rank of gentlemen, are unhappily destined,) is a preference of heathen writers and heathen thoughts and objects to Christian, and, if there were no other evil resulting from it, it would be sufficient to condemn it, that it occupies the time and attention which should be employed on matters of greater and eternal importance. God's word, and his dealings with

man, from the creation to the consummation of all things, is a matter of importance to every soul of every age; but the history and learning of the heathens, even so learned as to use it in the illustrating of God's dealings with man, can be the object of but very few: so that the time thus spent is worse than lost, it is abused to bad ends; and it often happens, that he who is ignorant of God and Christ, is knowing in the heathen fables.

To shew how much this heathenism prevails, I may appeal to the dramatic pieces which are performed nightly at our theatres throughout the kingdom, to the songs usually sung, to the works of our poets and writers of books of entertainment, to the works of our painters and statuaries, and whose pieces find a place even in our churches.

In my discourse on the character of Balaam, I mentioned the heathen nature of *astrology*, as being founded on the heathen mythology. I will just advert to the Astrologer's Almanack (called *Vox Stellarum*) for this year*. The writer, in his title-page, calls the year, "the year of Human Redemption 1825," from which we are to suppose that he is a believer in Jesus Christ. He speaks, too, of "the laws of an over-ruling power;" but who, or what, that power is, he does not say. And, in the month of September, he speaks of "a hateful conjunction of the two malignants of the starry region *Saturn* and *Mars*;" and, in November, mention is made of *Venus*, and he ventures to foretell events on account of the prevalence of these planets†. Now this is

* This Sermon was preached May 1, 1825.

† The following remark, in the Edinburgh Review for August 1820, No. 67, Vol. 34, p. 84, is well worthy the consideration of any one inclined to place any reliance upon astrology. Speaking of

great folly, or great wickedness, or both. Were there such beings as these deities? and, if there

astrologers, the writer says, they “pretend that your whole history is to be traced to the constellation under which you were born: and when you object that two men born at the same time have the most different character and fortune, they answer, that there was *an imperceptible interval* between the moment of their births, that made the whole difference. But if this short interval, of which no one could be aware, made the whole difference, it also makes their whole science vain.”

But this remark is not new, for J. Whitefoot, in his “Death’s Alarum: A Funeral Sermon on the Right Reverend Joseph Hall, Bishop of Norwich,” the text of which is Genesis xlvii. 29., (see Jones’s *Bishop Hall, His Life and Times*, p. 532.) says, “*The time drew nigh that Israel must die*; now when he spake to Joseph about his burial, as followeth in the verse: but how nigh we know not precisely, no more perhaps did he. All the astrologers in Egypt could not precisely tell him the day and hour of his death: yet have we a company of gypsies of that profession, that will pretend to do it. But they are well confuted by St. Augustine, (De Civit. Dei. i. 5.) from the example of these twins, Jacob and Esau, whose birth-time was so near, as in nature it was possible: for Esau was not quite born before Jacob; Jacob’s hand was born before Esau’s foot: and yet we know the disposition of their bodies, and of their minds, with the manner of their lives, was as contrary, as if they had been born under the most opposite horoscopes that are in the whole sphere of heaven. Moses was brought up in all the wisdom and learning of Egypt, (as St. Stephen saith, Acts vii. 22.) that is, in the sciences of Physic and Astrology, the most famous learning of Egypt; and yet could he not number his own days, but prays to God in his Psalm to teach him that art. Ps. xc. 12. Nor did he desire to know the precise number of his days, but only the wisdom to consider the paucity of them, so as to improve them to the honour of God, and the good of himself and his Church. To know the just time of our death, is not possible without a revelation; and therefore not to be desired without presumption. It is a thing that depends much upon the arbitrary acts of the will of both a man’s self, and of others (as constant experience teacheth) the knowledge whereof is the peculiar property of Omniscience: and therefore for men to pretend to this knowledge from the stars is an impiety, not much less than that of worshipping them, being a bold intrusion into the most peculiar and essential privilege of

were, and *are*, *had* they, and *have they now*, any power in the disposal of events? It may be thought that such a work is beneath notice, and can have no influence. But it was stated a few years ago, that there were four hundred thousand of this almanack sold yearly; and, on an eminent *astronomer*, seeing the folly of these predictions, and prevailing on the publishers to substitute reasonable *astronomy* for them, the work lost much of its sale; and, so, the publishers, for the sake of the money, returned to their folly and impiety. And it is well known, by those who lived in the same town with the late writer of the almanack, that he was frequently applied to by persons to have their fortunes told.

I wish that you should distinctly understand the difference between *astrology* and *astronomy*. The *astrologer* pretends to *read* the stars, that is to *foretell* future events by the knowledge of the stars, and *that* according to the heathen mythology. The *astronomer* is one who studies the *laws*, or *rules*, by which the Creator guides and governs the heavenly bodies; so that, from observing what has happened, he concludes what will happen again; and *this* is a very useful science, and tends to set forth the infinite power, and wisdom, and goodness of their wonderful Creator and Preserver. So that the *astrologer* is no better than a *heathen*; the *astronomer* is a very useful member of society; and, generally, as seeing more than others into the wonderful works of God, is a more devout worshipper of Him.

I would just observe, that it is not the mere *names* of Jupiter and Saturn and Mars to which I would divine knowledge. It is enough for us to know as much as Israel did, that our time to die draws nigh, and so much every man doth know, that knows any thing at all."

object (though I think it a pity, that, when a great part of the learned world became Christian, the *names* were not *changed*,) but it is to the *thing*, to the *idolatrous* use of them. The *astronomer* uses these merely as *names*; the *astrologer* uses them as *influences, powers, deities*.

But it is not in what is called a *Classical Education* only, that this heathenism is to be found. It infects, more or less, very many of the books used in the education of those of humbler life. There we have Jupiter and Juno, and Hercules and Apollo, and Cupid and Hymen and Plutus, and Pan and Fortune, and Venus and Ceres. In one of the popular spelling-books, and, likewise, printed at the end of one of the late editions of Dr. Watts's truly "Divine" and Christian "Songs," is the *Universal Prayer* of Pope, which confounds all religion. It begins,

Father of all, in ev'ry age,
In ev'ry clime ador'd,
By saint, by savage, or by sage,
Jehovah, Jove, or Lord.

I have been told of an instance of a person on a death-bed repeating this, as a prayer to the God in whose presence the separated soul was soon about to appear. But what notion could the speaker have of God? And, as to a *Saviour*, it takes no notice whatever of him. That you may not think this a singular opinion, a mere *whimsical idea* of my own, I will read to you a passage from an address "To the Reader," prefixed to a work on "The Catholic Doctrine of the Trinity *," by the excellent Jones

* In consequence of the remarks there made upon it, and likewise by Mrs. Trimmer in the II^d Volume of her *Guardian of Education*,

of Nayland, and published by The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

“The case is now,” says he, “with *Christians* under the Gospel, as it anciently was with the *Jews* under the Law : they believe in the only true God ; while the unchristian part of mankind who are by far the majority, either know him not, or wilfully deny him ; as *Pharaoh* did the *God of the Hebrews* when he was told of him. And we are now got to such a pitch of indevotion and ignorance, that among those who profess and call themselves *Christians*, there are too many who are almost come to be *Heathens* without knowing it. For there is a fashionable notion propagated by most of our moral writers, and readily subscribed to by those who say their prayers but seldom, and can never find time to read their Bible, that all who worship any God, worship the *same* God ; as if we worshipped the three letters of the *word* God, instead of the *Being* meant and understood by it. The *Universal Prayer* of Mr. *Alexander Pope* was composed upon this plan ; wherein the supreme Being is addressed as a common *Father of all*, under the names, *Jehovah*, *Jove*, and *Lord*. And this humour of confounding things, which ought to be distinguished at the peril of our souls, and of comprehending *Believers* and *Idolaters* under one and the same religion, is called a *Catholic spirit*, that shews the very exaltation of *Christian Charity*. But God, it is to be feared, will require an account of it under another name ; and though the *Poet* could see no difference, but has mistaken *Jove* or *Jupiter* for the

p. 454, the writer of this Sermon altered it, and published it in the second Volume of his Collection of Songs in three Vols. 12mo. 1806 and 1807.

same *Father of all* with the *Lord Jehovah*; yet the *Apostle* has instructed us better; who, when the *Priest of Jupiter* came to offer sacrifice, exhorted him very passionately to *turn from those vanities unto the living God*, (Acts xiv. 15.) well knowing that he whom the *Priest* adored under the name of *Jupiter*, was not the *living God*, but a creature, a nothing, a *vanity*. Yet the Catholic spirit of a moralist can discern no difference; and while it pretends some zeal for a sort of universal religion, common to *believers* and *infidels*, betrays a sad indifference for the Christian religion in particular. This error is so monstrous in a land enlightened by the Gospel, and yet so very common amongst us at present, that I may be pardoned for speaking of it in the manner it deserves. And let me beseech every serious person, who is willing to have his prayers heard, to consider this matter a little better, and use a more correct form; for God, who is jealous of his honour, and has no communion with idols, will certainly reject the petition that sets him upon a level with *Baal* and *Jupiter**.”

How much *Fortune*, *Fate*, and *Chance*, usurp the place of PROVIDENCE and GOD, almost daily reading and observation will afford us abundant proof. A

* In further illustration of this subject, the reader is referred to the same Jones's "Reflections on the growth of Heathenism, among modern Christians, in a Letter to a Friend at Oxford. Humbly recommended to the serious consideration of all those who are entrusted with the Education of Youth." See Jones's Works in twelve Vols. Vol. III., and the Scholar Armed against the Errors of the Times, Vol. II. See also Jones's Considerations on the Religious Worship of the Heathens," Vol. XII. of his Works, and "Letters from a Tutor to his Pupils." Vol. XI. Letters XII, XIII, and XIV.

very strong instance of the use of the term *Fortune*, I must call it the *deification* of *Fortune*, occurs in one of the most popular accounts of a "Voyage round the World" that was ever written, and, now, circulated under the sanction of a great Religious Society. What adds to the impiety of it is, that it purports to be written by the "Chaplain" to the ship of the "Commander in chief" "in that expedition," but it is well known, that it was not written by him. The *Introduction* begins with saying, "Notwithstanding the great improvement of navigation within the last two centuries, a Voyage round the World is still considered as an enterprise of so very singular a nature, that the public have never failed to be extremely inquisitive about the various accidents and turns of fortune, with which this uncommon attempt is generally attended." (p. iii.*.) He afterwards speaks of "the uncommon instances of varying fortune, which attended the whole enterprise." (p. iv.) And, again, "He had likewise the good fortune, in some of his captures, to possess himself of a great number of letters and papers of a public nature." (p. v.) Afterwards, in the body of the work, he says, "this good fortune now no longer attended us." "This proved the more unfortunate." (p. 87.) Again, "By this time we were convinced of what consequence it would have been to us, had fortune seconded the prudent views of the Com-

* The references here given are to the edition of *Lord Anson's Voyage round the World*, printed for the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 12mo. 1821.

At the desire of Messrs. Rivingtons, the writer of these Sermons has revised both *Lord Anson's Voyage*, and *Robinson Crusoe*, which they intend printing with new Prefaces and Notes.

modore, by permitting us to have secured the Governor." (p. 209.) The work concludes with these words, "Thus was this expedition finished, when it had lasted three years and nine months, after having, by its event, strongly evinced this important truth, that, though prudence, intrepidity, and perseverance united, are not exempted from the blows of adverse fortune; yet, in a long series of transactions, they usually rise superior to its power, and, in the end, rarely fail of proving successful." (p. 444.)

Are these the sentiments of one who believes in an all-powerful superintending PROVIDENCE, in whose hands are all our lives and every action of our lives, before whom "the very hairs of our head are all numbered," (Matt. x. 30.) and before whom "not a sparrow falleth to the ground without his notice" and permission? The Psalmist's view of maritime affairs is very different to that of the writer of the Voyage. He says, (cvii. 23—31.) "They that go down to the sea in ships, and occupy their business in great waters, these men see the works of THE LORD and *his* wonders in the deep. For at *his* word, the stormy wind ariseth, which lifteth up the waves thereof. They are carried up to the heaven, and down again to the deep: their soul melteth away because of the trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man: and are at their wits' end. So, when they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, *he* delivereth them out of their distress. For *he* maketh the storm to cease: so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad, because they are at rest: and, so, *he* bringeth them unto the haven where they would be. O that men would therefore praise

THE LORD for his goodness, and declare the wonders that *he* doeth for the children of men* !”

Of *Fate* put into the place of PROVIDENCE, or God, or, sometimes, as a being acting in opposition to God, it were easy to produce an abundance of instances, but I shall confine myself to one book, a book of amusement, the adventures of a person who lived for many years by himself upon an uninhabited island, and which is circulated under the same high authority. He is supposed himself to write the account of his adventures, and says, “My ill fate pushed me on with an obstinacy that nothing could resist; and though I had several times, loud calls from my reason, and my more composed judgment, to go home, yet I had no power to do it. I know not what to call this, nor will I urge, that it is a secret, over-ruling decree, that hurries us on to be the instruments of our own destruction, even though it be before us, and that we rush upon it with our eyes open. Certainly, nothing but some such decreed, unavoidable misery attending, and which it was impossible for me to escape, could have pushed me forward against the calm reasonings and persuasions of my most retired thoughts, and against two such visible instructions as I had met with in my first attempt.” (p. 10 †.)

* Since writing the above, the author has met with the “Narrative of the Loss of the Kent East Indiaman, by fire, in the Bay of Biscay. March 1st, 1825. By a Passenger,” who is said, on good authority, to be Major M’Gregor of the 31st Regiment of foot.

This is a Narrative of the deepest interest, and written in the spirit of a true Christian.

† The references here given are to *The Life and Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*, printed for the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 12mo, 1820.

Again, "it was always my fate to choose for the worse." (p. 12.) And "my resolutions were, blow which way it would, I would be gone from this horrid place where I was, and leave the rest to fate." (p. 17.) "But I that was born to be my own destroyer, could no more resist the offer, than I could restrain my first rambling designs, when my father's good counsel was lost upon me." (p. 31.) Being in a tempest, he says, "for twelve days together, we could do nothing but drive, and scudding away before it, let it carry us whither ever fate and the fury of the winds directed." (p. 32.)

The time will not allow me to bring more instances, and I think you will confess, that it is not without reason I said, "it is astonishing how *little* God is really *confessed* and *worshipped* and *loved*." Is not all this going "after other gods?" (Deut. vi. 14.) Let us, then, "turn" from the "vanities" of which I have been speaking, "unto the living God."

The Bible is, not only the most important book in the world, but it is the most interesting, the most delightful. What are all the other books in the world compared with it, all the histories, or all the tales? The tales of other nations are false, ridiculous, and absurd; the facts of the Bible are wonderful, miraculous, and true. What are the annals of other nations to our account of the Creation, the Deluge, the dispersion at Babel, the Exodus from Egypt, the Journey in the Wilderness, the taking possession of the Promised Land, the Judges and Kings of Israel, the building of the Temple, the Destruction of it and the Captivity, the return and re-building of it, the Prophets, their prophecies and their fulfilment, the history of Jesus Christ, the destruction of Jerusalem, and dispersion of the Jews,

and the foretold-history of the Christian Church and its enemies to the end of this world? No book contains such a variety of matter, such varied compositions, from the simple narrative, to the lofty prophecy, the most beautiful, the most sublime of poetry!

But some of my least learned hearers will, perhaps, say, How are we to come to the knowledge of these things, and to understand them, and to relish them, and to teach them to our children, and to talk of them when we sit in the house, and when we walk by the way, and when we lie down, and when we rise up?

To this it may be answered, That all of you have had, and still have, opportunities of learning. Those who cannot *yet* read, may still learn; it is never too late. Those who cannot teach their children, their children (who have all an opportunity of learning) may teach them. Then, here, is the church open every sabbath day, where you may hear the Bible read and explained, and you may have—if you do but wish it, and strive for it—constant opportunities in your own houses. For instance, now, I will lay down how a common day-labourer might keep up this constant walking with God. He rises early to his labour: let him not leave his room, or his house, till he has offered up his prayers; and, if he knows no other, he, at least, can use the Lord's Prayer. He returns home to his family to breakfast. He might then join with his family in prayer, and read a chapter, or a few verses,—or his wife, or one of the children, might read, and this might furnish subject for thought and meditation during the day. At his dinner, he will thank the Creator of all, and the giver of all good things, for the food which is afforded them, recollecting, that, however plain

and scanty, there are thousands in the world worse off. In the evening, when he returns home, he may question his children as to what they have learned in the day, and he may read to them, or they may read to him, another portion of Scripture, and they may close the evening with family prayer. Where there are pious families living near to one another, where one has readers and the other not,—or merely for the sake of social piety—they might meet, and the one assist, encourage, and animate the other. If they can raise their voices in a hymn, they can add vocal praise, thanksgiving and prayer. *This is done* in the families of many who are poor and plain and unlearned, and why *might it not* be done in all? —Why is it not done in the families of all, but that they have not *a heart* for it? In families where there is more knowledge and more leisure, both the call of duty and the means of fulfilling it are greater.

Moses goes on—Deut. vi. 8, 9.—“And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.”

This the Jews understood literally; and, accordingly, wrote texts of Scripture on slips of parchment, which they wore on their foreheads, on their wrists, in the skirts of their garments, (which were called *phylacteries*,) and nailed them, also, to their doorposts. And, in our Lord's time, this outward shew had grown to such a height that he reproved them, (Matt. xxiii. 1—6.) for making broad their phylacteries, while they wholly disregarded the practice of the precepts. Within due bounds, the writing of important sentences in our houses, on our public buildings, and within our places of public worship,

is striking and useful. I have often mentioned to you the instance of the heathen emperor Alexander Severus, who, when he had learned from the professors of Christianity, the Golden Rule, *Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them, for this is the law and the prophets*; (Matt. xix. 19.) had it written upon the walls of his palace, and on the banners of his army.

And of a kindred nature with this is the sort of *pictures* with which the walls of our rooms are ornamented; subjects of sacred history, well done and well chosen, are both pleasing and instructive; but many of these, being done by ignorant persons, tend as much to mislead, as to instruct.

And, if the Israelites had such things to teach their children, and to talk of when they were in the house and in the way, how much *more* have *we*, under the *Gospel*? We have the *substance* of which they had the *shadow*.

“When thy son asketh thee, in time to come,” says Moses, Deut. vi. 20—25., “saying, What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the Lord our God hath commanded you? Then shalt thou say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh’s bondmen in Egypt; and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand: and the Lord shewed signs and wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his household before our eyes: and he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he sware unto our fathers. And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as it is at this day. And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these com-

mandments before the Lord our God, as he hath commanded us."

So, when *your children* ask you, Why are children baptized? Why was I baptized? Why do we keep the Sabbath day, and do no work, and go to church? What is the Bible, and why do we read it? Why do you take the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper? and what is the meaning of it?—Or, if they do not *ask* you, you should stir up their attention to it, and set them upon *inquiry*, and *tell them*,—We are fallen, corrupt creatures, helpless of ourselves, We were in bondage unto sin and Satan, and Christ came to redeem us, and died upon the cross for us. He established a church apart from the sinful world, and appointed baptism as the means of entrance into that church. The Sabbath we keep holy in remembrance of God's creating the world, and of Christ's rising from the dead. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was appointed by Christ in remembrance of his body broken and his blood shed upon the cross for us. He, too, promised to send his Holy Spirit to sanctify us, to lead us into all knowledge, to strengthen us to do his will, and he will give it to those who ask for it, and who do these things in obedience to his command.

And, not only *tell them* of these things, but *lead them* in the right way. Pray with them at home, read the Bible with them, bring them to church, bring them to the Sacrament:—but, if you do *not* these things, you are no people of God, you are *not* of the church of Christ, you are no better than *heathens*, and your children will be as bad, or worse.

When the children of Israel were led out of Egypt into the wilderness, in their way to the promised

land, some lingered after the flesh-pots of Egypt, and would have returned ; some (or the same) doubted whether the promised land was so pleasant, and so fruitful, as Moses said ; and some were afraid of the opposition they should meet in taking possession, from the giants. This, as I have before stated, is but a type, or shadow, of our situation in the wilderness of this world, journeying on to a promised country, more pleasant, more fruitful. Let us not linger for the flesh pots of Egypt, nor doubt that the promises will be fulfilled, nor fear the opposition we may meet with. Are we attached to *this world*? It is, indeed, a goodly world, notwithstanding it is fallen, miserably fallen, from what it was when God created it. Yes, the world has certainly much to gratify and delight. Let us look abroad to the prospect of hill and vale, the earth covered with grass and corn, and flowers and shrubs and trees, the birds singing among the branches, or flying in the air, the beasts moving upon the earth,—the blue sky, with the fleecy clouds and the glorious cheering sun, by day,—or, at night, with a deeper blue, inlaid with innumerable golden glittering stars, and the moon walking in brightness:—we have pleasant houses to dwell in, comfortable clothing to wear, and agreeable food to eat;—we have the society of relations and friends: yet all this partakes of the nature of a fallen world, blight and mildew, storm and tempest and frost, and the unruly passions of sinful man, and sickness, accidents and sorrows, are all material and grievous diminutions of the happiness which God *intended* for us, even in *this* world. But, in the happier country, promised by God to all those who are redeemed in Jesus Christ, all, will be

perfect, every object will be beautiful and perfect, every circumstance delightful, every being without frailty, our own infirmities and sins and those of our friends, at an end, we shall associate with glorified saints and angels—we shall be with CHRIST and with GOD.

SERMON XX.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.—DEUTERONOMY VIII, IX.

MANNA.

DEUTERONOMY viii. 3.

And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with MANNA, (which thou knowest not, neither did thy fathers know,) that he might make thee know, that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live.

WHEN we passed rapidly over the latter part of the Book of Exodus, on the first Sunday after Easter, I could but slightly notice the circumstance of God's feeding the Israelites with *Manna* in the wilderness. The subject occurs again, and *that* with spiritual improvement, in the first Lesson for this morning's service. And, as the only chapters which claim our notice, this day, are the VIIIth and the IXth, I know not that I can select any subject of greater importance for our consideration. In the VIIIth chapter, Moses still goes on to urge the observance of the first command, from what God had done for them and promised to them; and, in the IXth, he strives to dissuade them from the opinion of their own righteousness, by reminding them of their several rebellions.

When the Israelites departed from Egypt, they “took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading-troughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders.” (Exod. xii. 34.) And whether it was the intention of God, from the first, to lead them into the wilderness, or to have led them directly from Egypt, “through the way of the land of the Philistines,” (xiii. 17.) which was not above three, or four, days’ journey, and that they had provision sufficient for such a journey, does not appear. But, on Pharaoh pursuing after them, God led them by the pass on the west of the Red Sea, between the sea and the mountains, and, then, through the bed of the sea, into the wilderness of Shur, or Etham, and thence to Elim, and thence—Exod. xvi. 1. —to “the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt.” All the provisions which they had brought with them out of Egypt were, now, exhausted; and, here, was a camp of about two millions of persons without food. What was to be done? Why, were they not brought here at the command of God? did not his presence, in the pillar and the cloud, attend them? had he not led them safely through the sea, while he had destroyed their enemies? and had he not changed the bitter into sweet waters? Would the God of all power and of all goodness, the Maker of all things, would he bring his people to *perish* in the wilderness? No. God is a surer trust than the dough in the kneading-troughs. Yet,—prodigious to relate! “the whole congregation of the children of Israel *murmured* against Moses and Aaron,” and “said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the

flesh-pots, and when we did eat bread to the full! for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger." This was the language of impatience and fretfulness, as well as of impiety and distrust. Probably they had not such *plenty* in Egypt, nor did they think it so *good*, while they were *slaves* there.

"Then said the Lord unto Moses, Behold, I will rain"—What? "fire and brimstone from the Lord out of heaven," to punish them for their ingratitude and distrust? *This* he might justly have done:—but God is "slow to anger, and of great mercy:"—"Then said the Lord unto Moses, Behold I will rain *bread* from heaven for you," that is *Manna*, whereof they may make themselves *bread*, it shall fall down from heaven, in the manner of *rain*, "and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate," an omer, "every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no. And it shall come to pass, that, on the sixth day," that is the sixth day of the week, "they shall prepare that which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily."

"And Moses and Aaron said unto all the children of Israel, At even, then, ye shall know that the Lord hath brought you out from the land of Egypt," and not we, as you say, to kill you with hunger. "And, in the morning, then ye shall see the glory of the Lord," that is the glorious appearance of God in the cloud, as mentioned at the 10th verse, "for that he heareth your murmurings against the Lord: and what are we, that ye murmur against us?" We are but instruments, which God makes use of in this great work; he is the principal author. "And Moses said, This shall be when the Lord shall give

you, in the evening, flesh to eat, and, in the morning, bread to the full; for that the Lord heareth your murmurings, which ye murmur against him: and what are we? your murmurings are not against us, but against the Lord."

"And Moses spake unto Aaron, Say unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, Come near," that is in the place of public worship, before the Lord: "for he hath heard your murmurings. And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked towards the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud," probably with an extraordinary brightness.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel; speak unto them, saying, At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread: and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God," ye shall have fresh proofs of my power and faithfulness.

"And it came to pass, that, at even, the quails," feathered fowls, "came up and covered the camp; and, in the morning, the dew," under which the Manna was hid, "lay round about the host. And, when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness, there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar-frost on the ground. And, when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is *Manna*," or "*What is this?*" "for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the *Bread* which the Lord hath given you to eat," this is the portion God hath given you.

"This is the thing which the Lord hath commanded, Gather of it every man according to his

eating: an omer," that is about *five pints* of our measure, "for every man, according to the number of your persons, take ye every man for them which are in his tents. And the children of Israel did so, and gathered some more, some less. And, when they did mete it with an omer, he that gathered much, had nothing over; and he that gathered little, had no lack; they gathered every man according to his eating," that is, every master of a family according to the number of his family, and they put it into a common stock, perhaps a heap, or store, to each tribe; and, though some gathered more, and some less, yet, when measured out, it was just the quantity that was wanted. St. Paul—2 Cor. viii. 14, 15,—applies this to the charity, or contributions, of Christians, that they should impart to those who need.

"And Moses said, Let no man leave of it till the morning;" what they could not eat was to be made away with, to prevent their distrust in God's care and goodness in giving them more. "Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses, but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and stank: and Moses was wroth with them," was angry at this perverseness, this unbelief and disobedience. "And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating; and, when the sun waxed hot, it melted." Hereby God taught them diligence in providing food while they had time and means, and to depend daily upon his providence.

"And it came to pass, that, on the sixth day, they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man." It does not appear that Moses had told the people to do this; but, to their surprise, when they had gathered and divided the usual quantity, there

was as much more left. “And all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses,” that they might receive directions from him how to order this their double portion. “And he said unto them, This is that which the Lord hath said” to the patriarchs of old, “To-morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord;” a plain intimation, that the sabbath was observed before the covenant at mount Sinai, though, probably, the Israelites were not allowed to observe it during their bondage in Egypt. And Moses went on to say “bake that which ye will bake to-day, and seethe that ye will seethe,” that ye may not have it to do on the sabbath; “and that which remaineth over, lay up for you to be kept until the morning. And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade; and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein.” This was another extraordinary providence, and shewed the difference between doing a thing by God’s command and blessing, and doing it contrary to these. “And Moses said, Eat that to-day,” which ye gathered yesterday; “for to-day is a sabbath unto the Lord: to-day ye shall not find it in the field. Six days ye shall gather it, but, on the seventh day, which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none. And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none. And the Lord” was displeased with them, and “said unto Moses,” that he might say to the people who did this, “How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?” especially the important law of keeping the sabbath? “See, for that the Lord hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days: abide ye every man in his place,” in the camp,

“let no man go out of his place on the seventh day,” to gather Manna, or to do any servile work. “So the people rested on the seventh day” from gathering manna. “And the house of Israel called the name thereof *manna*,” which, as I said before, was taken from the question they asked, *What is it?* “And it was like coriander seed, white; and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey.”

Thus had the Israelites what might be called a daily supply of corn from heaven ready threshed and dressed. A learned commentator calculates that they consumed ninety-four thousand four hundred and sixty-six bushels, that is eighteen thousand eight hundred and ninety-three of our *loads* in a day. Having only to gather, grind and dress it.

“And Moses said, This is the thing which the Lord commandeth, Fill an omer of it to be kept for your generations; that they may see the bread wherewith I have fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you forth from the land of Egypt. And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a pot,”—St. Paul tells us,—Heb. ix. 4,—that it was a golden pot,—“and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the Lord to be kept for your generations.” This was another miracle, that it kept so long without putrefaction. “As the Lord commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the testimony to be kept;” that is, the ark wherein the testimony, or two tables which testified, or declared, God’s will to the people, were to be put. And it is to be observed, that, though this is related here to make a full end of the history of the manna, yet it was not done till after the giving of the law, as we learn Deut. x. 5.: and we are told, by the Jews, that it remained in the

tabernacle and the temple, till the temple was destroyed, and the Jews carried captive to Babylon, by Nebuchadnezzar.

“And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years,” that is nearly forty years, “until they came to a land inhabited: they did eat manna, until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan,” where they found ripe corn ready for them to take possession of.

Such is the account of the *manna* and the mode of God's giving it; which, considered merely as a piece of history, is truly interesting and wonderful. But it rises infinitely in importance, when we consider what our Lord says upon the subject, when discoursing with the Jews, in the synagogue at Capernaum, after he had fed the five thousand persons with the five barley loaves and two small fishes, as related in the sixth chapter of St. John, which was as wonderful in its way, and required as much a divine power to effect it, as to rain down manna from heaven. After this, when many resorted to him, “Jesus answered them, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed. Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we may work the works of God? Jesus answered, and said unto them, This is *the work of God, That ye believe on Him whom he hath sent*. They said, therefore, unto him, What sign shewest thou, then, that we may see and believe thee? what dost thou work? Our fathers did eat *manna* in the desert; as it is written, He gave

them bread from heaven to eat." What strange infatuation, or perverseness, was this! They wanted *a sign*, a proof that he came from God, such as the giving manna from heaven. But he had just given one, he had fed five thousand persons with only five loaves and two small fishes. Could a power less than that of the Creator of all things have done it? He had given them a *sign*, then; and, not only in the multiplying of the bread, but in very many miracles, publicly known, and publicly performed, the changing water into wine at the marriage feast in Cana of Galilee, (John ii.) in healing the son of king Herod's officer, who lay sick at Capernaum, (John iv. 46—54,) in healing those possessed with devils, (Matt. xii. 22, 23. Mark xxiii. 23—28. Matt. viii. 28—34,) in cleansing a leper, (Luke v. 12—15) in healing a paralytic, (Mark ii. 1—12,) in healing the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda, (John v. 2, 16,) in healing the man with a withered hand, (Matt. xii. 10—13. Luke vi. 6—11,) in raising to life the dead son of the widow of Nain, (Luke vii. 11—17,) in stilling a tempest, (Matt. viii. 23—27,) in raising the daughter of Jairus, (Mark v. 22—24, 35—43;) in restoring sight to the blind, (Matt. xii. 22, 23. Matt. ix. 27, 31;) in restoring speech to the dumb, (Matt. xii. 22, 23. Matt. ix. 32—34,) and, yet, they say, "What *sign* shewest thou, that we may see and believe thee? What dost thou work?" It is *not* a *sign* that they want, but *faith*, belief, a mind open to truth and conviction. "Then Jesus said unto them, (John vi. 32—35,) Verily, verily, I said unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven," what is really and truly the support of *life*, the better, the spiritual life, "my Father giveth you THE TRUE BREAD FROM HEAVEN.

For *The Bread of God* is *He which cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world*. Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this Bread. And Jesus said unto them, I am THE BREAD OF LIFE : he that cometh to me, shall never hunger ; and he that believeth on me, shall never thirst.” “The Jews, then, murmured at him, because he said, *I am the Bread which came down from heaven*. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know ? how is it, then, that he saith, I came down from heaven ? Jesus, therefore, answered, and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves” (verse 41—43,) “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, hath everlasting life. *I am that Bread of Life*. Your fathers did eat Manna, in the wilderness, and are dead. This is *the Bread which cometh down from heaven*. If any man eat of this Bread, he shall live for ever : and the *Bread* that I will give is my *flesh*, which I will give for the life of the world. The Jews, therefore, strove amongst themselves, saying, How can this man give us his *flesh* to eat ? Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life ; and I will raise him up, at the last day : For my *flesh* is *meat indeed*, and my *blood* is *drink indeed*. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in *me*, and *I* in *him*. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father ; so, he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is *that Bread* which came down from heaven : not as your fathers did eat Manna, and are dead. He that eateth of this Bread, shall live for ever.” (verse 47—58.)

I have been thus particular, in quoting this passage, at some length, though not at its full length, for the same reason, as, probably, our Lord himself repeated and varied the expressions,—“The Bread of Life,” “The true Bread,” “The Bread from heaven,” “The Bread of God,” to explain it, to illustrate it, to impress it upon their minds, to inculcate, to *tread it in*, as it were, that they should understand, and never forget it: CHRIST is *the Bread of Life*, as naturally and essentially necessary to the life of the SOUL, as *Bread*, or food, is to the *body*. And, as the signification of the *Manna* was *What is this? We know not what it is*. So is Christ as utterly *unknown* to thousands and thousands. They live, indeed, in a country calling itself *Christian*, and they hear his name mentioned, and hear the history of him read from the New Testament; but, as to *knowing* him, that is, knowing, understanding the great and merciful end for which he came into the world, and applying it to themselves, and loving it, and feeling grateful for it, and clinging to it, as their only hope and good, here, and hereafter, it is, to the generality of persons, if they *think* and *ask* about it at all, *What is it? We know not what it is*.

If, from spiritual, we may, again, return to worldly, or carnal, considerations, from the circumstance of God's supplying his people in the wilderness with food miraculously from heaven, I would take occasion to notice the theory, or idea of a great modern political economist*, who has gained much confidence with politicians, who legislate more on worldly principles, than from a consideration of the

* T. R. Malthus, A. M. in his “Essay on the Principle of Population.”

word and dispensations of God. He assumes it as a fact, that the population of any country, if there are not any checks to it from disease, famine, war, or moral restraints, is *doubled* in every *twenty-five years*, and increases in the proportions of 1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, and so on : and, that the produce of the earth, or food increases, even with the utmost care in cultivation, in the same periods, only as the numbers, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and so on ; so that, in a short time, the earth would get overpeopled ; and that, therefore, it is necessary for governments to impose restraints upon marriage, lest the world should become over-stocked and have to be thinned again by the necessary consequences of famine and misery. This is, I believe, a fair statement of his argument, or position : at least I mean it to be so. And, as this seems to be in direct opposition to the first blessing and command of God, repeated after the flood, “ be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it,” (Gen. i. 28. ix. 1.) I think it right to say a few words upon the subject.

[In the first place, then, his first principles, both that mankind increase in such a proportion, and that food increases only in such a proportion, are disputed and denied by persons of as great, or greater, ability*.

* By Dr. Jarrold, in his “ Dissertations on Man, Philosophical, Physiological and Political ; in answer to Mr. Malthus’s Essay on the Principle of Population ;” by the Rev. Robert Acklom Ingram, in his “ Disquisitions on Population ; in which the Principles of the Essay on Population, by the Rev. T. R. Malthus, are examined and refuted ;” by Bishop Watson, in his “ Anecdotes” of his own “ Life,” 8vo. vol. ii. p. 328. See, also, the Critical Review for January, 1807, the Edinburgh Review, for March, 1821, No. lxix. p. 102 ; the Investigator, vol. ii. p. 294., vol. iii. p. 86. ; Pettigrew’s Life of Dr. Lettsom, vol. ii. p. 109. ; and Memoirs of the Rev. Robert Wynell Mayow, p. 57.

But, even were it nearer to truth than it seems to be ; and did mankind increase in such a proportion, the resources of food from increased produce, and from the practice of economy, were this the place to discuss such topics, seem to be almost endless. The means of subsistence and the possession of a help-mate seem to be the natural rights of every one who is born into the world ; and, ere legislators should presume to interfere with these, every article of *luxury*,—either in the occupation of land, or the expenditure of provisions,—should be relinquished by themselves. And, on the other hand, it should be urged, that luxury and waste should be equally avoided by the poor ; and it may fairly be questioned, whether there is not, often, as much profusion and waste, *in proportion*, in the houses of the poor, as in those of the rich. I appeal to the consciences of my hearers, who call themselves *poor*, and often complain of *want*, and apply for assistance from their parish, whether their *wants* and *difficulties* have not, in general, arisen from *themselves*. Whether they have not often, when they have had plenty, eaten as much at *one* meal, as would have reasonably, and well, or better, have made them *two*. Whether they have not wasted by one mode of cooking, twice as much as would have done by another ; and whether their children have not often thrown away, at different times, in a week, what would have served for the provisions of a day ? Have not the men often spent in drink, what would have served their family with bread ? and have not the women spent in vain dress, what would have furnished all the family with comforts ? The case is, I believe, that a *vicious* population will always find its level, or destroy itself, to a certain degree, by sin, misery, and

early death: and a *virtuous* population would always maintain itself by industry and frugality,—or, should these prove really insufficient, God would always provide for them by what we call *second* or *natural causes*; or else would afford them a *miraculous* supply, as he did to his people in the wilderness.]

Our Lord, after his baptism, (Matt. iv. 1—4.) “was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil. And, when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterwards an hungred. And, when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.” He doubted his being the Son of God; and, if he was, he wished to lead him into a vain display of his power. “But He answered and said, It is written,” that is, in the book of Moses, what we call the viiith chapter of the book of Deuteronomy, and the 3d verse, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” He would not enter into any vain and unnecessary display of his power, at the suggestion of an unbeliever, a tempter, the devil. His meat was to fulfil the will and word of God.

But I would ask *you*, Whether *you* do not yield to the temptations of the devil, when you take any wrong methods to supply yourselves with bread, or are guilty of any thing wrong in the *use*, or, rather, the *abuse* of it,—as in stealing, in cheating, in waste, in hoarding, in murmuring for more, in loathing what is sent? “Give us *this day* our *daily bread*,” is our daily prayer, and our daily bread is as much the gift of God, and to be received with thankfulness, and used at once with liberality and economy, as if it was absolutely rained down from heaven every morning, and gathered round about our habitations.

Never let us forget the words of our blessed Lord, in his Sermon on the Mount, "No man can serve two masters, for, either he will hate the one, and love the other; or, else, he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore, I say unto you, Take no thought," no over-anxious, distrustful thought, "for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you, by taking thought, can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and, yet, I say unto you, that even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which, to-day, is, and to-morrow, is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore, take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But, seek ye, first, the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matt. vi. 24—33.) "Blessed are they which do *hunger* and *thirst* after *righteousness*, for *they* shall be *filled*." (Matt. v. 6.)

SERMON, XXI.

SUNDAY AFTER ASCENSION DAY.—DEUTERONOMY X—XXXIV.

STATUTES AND JUDGMENTS TO BE OBSERVED: CIRCUMCISION—AGRICULTURAL LIFE—TITHES—THE LEVITE—SACRIFICES TO MOLOCH—CLEAN AND UNCLEAN ANIMALS—THE LANDMARK—THE FALSE-WITNESS—THE REBELLIOUS SON—TREATMENT OF ANIMALS—REMARK ON OBJECTIONS—THE CURSES—THE SONG OF MOSES—THE DEATH OF MOSES.

DEUTERONOMY xii. 1.

These are the Statutes and Judgements which ye shall observe to do, in the land which the Lord God of thy fathers giveth thee to possess it, all the days that ye live upon the earth.

OUR progress through the Bible leads us, this day, to the Xth chapter of Deuteronomy, the XIIth and XIIIth chapters are the lessons for the day; and, on Whitsunday, for the first lesson at morning service, we have part of the XVIth chapter, which appoints the three great feasts of the Jews; and, besides these, we have no more Sunday lessons from the book; the best use, therefore, of our small portion of time, this day, seems to be to pass through the chapters, with such brief remarks as the subjects seem to require, and the time will allow, so as to be most practical and useful to ourselves.

The Xth chapter is appointed as the first lesson, at morning service, on Ascension day, or Holy Thursday, and sets forth God's mercies in restoring

the two tables of stone on which the commandments had been written, and which had been broken by Moses, when he came down from the mount, and found the golden calf which Aaron had set up, and the people were worshipping.

That part of the chapter beginning at the 12th verse, to the end, is appointed, likewise, as the first lesson, at afternoon service, on the day of the Circumcision, and leads the Jews to the true and spiritual meaning of that rite, that they were to circumcise their *hearts*, as was afterwards more strongly urged by St. Paul—Rom. ii. 25, 29.—and should be applied by us to our *baptism*, that *that* is the *cleansing* of the *heart*, in the *spirit*, rather than the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

In the XIth chapter, Moses continues his exhortation to obedience, from their personal experience of God's great works, and their future expectations in the land of promise, and a blessing and a curse are set before them. The following verses, the 11th to the end of the 17th, are particularly interesting to *us*, as a people wholly employed in agriculture, “the land whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven; a land which the Lord thy God careth for: the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year, even unto the end of the year. And it shall come to pass, if you shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the Lord your God, and to serve him with all your heart, and with all your soul, that I will give you the rain of your land in due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn and thy wine and thine oil. And I will send grass in thy fields for thy

cattle, that thou mayest eat and be full. Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them; and, then, the Lord's wrath be kindled against you, and he shut up the heaven, that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit; and lest ye perish quickly from off the good land which the Lord giveth you."

In the XIIth chapter, God orders that all idols and places of idol worship shall be destroyed. "But, unto the place which the Lord your God shall choose, out of all your tribes, to put his name there, even unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come." Which is equally applicable to us Christians, and our places of worship, our churches. "Ye shall not do after all the things that we do here this day, every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes:" making to ourselves new religions, and new places of worship: and "thither shall ye bring" your "offerings" and your "tithes" and your "vows."

I have twice, since I came to this parish, preached a set of Three Discourses on *Tithes*, which have, likewise, been printed, and distributed to the principal tithe-payers, to explain the true state of tithes with *us*, in these days, as Christians; that, as the law of the land would *enforce* the payment of them, which the command of God would not, otherwise, probably, secure, the tithe-payers might be properly informed upon the subject, and pay them with the greater readiness and cheerfulness, and fulfil the injunction of the son of Sirach, "Dedicate thy tithes with gladness." (Eccles^{us}. xxxv. 9.) I shewed in them, that tithes had not their origin under the law of Moses, but had been appointed from the *earliest*

times, and that even Abraham, the father of the faithful, paid tithes to Melchizedek, who, St. Paul tells us, was a type of Christ, (Hebrews vi. 20. viii. 8.); and that Christ, now, “liveth” to “receive them:” and how can that be, but, as it was before the law, and under the law, by his *ministers*?

It is said, at the 19th verse of this XIIth chapter of Deuteronomy, “Take heed that thou forsake not the Levite as long as thou livest upon the earth.” A charge equally applicable to *you* and the Christian Levites, the priests. *Forsake* them not, by absenting yourselves from church, from the administration of the word and sacraments, by despising their counsels, and withholding their dues.

At the 29th verse, Moses says, “When the Lord thy God shall cut off the nations from before thee, whither thou goest to possess them, and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their land; take heed to thyself, that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou inquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their Gods? even so will I do likewise. Thou shalt not do so unto the Lord thy God: for every abomination to the Lord, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters, they have burnt in the fire unto their gods.” The psalmist says (cvi. 37.) “They sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils,” and Bishop Horne, in his Commentary on the Psalms, on this verse, says, “We stand astonished, doubtless, at this horrid, barbarous, and unnatural impiety, of offering children by fire to a Moloch; but how little is it considered, that children, brought up in the ways of ignorance, error, vanity,

folly, and vice, are more effectually sacrificed to the great adversary of mankind."

In the XIIIth chapter, Moses, having, in the former chapters, warned the people against being led to idolatry by the neighbouring nations, in this, directs them how to behave to idolaters among themselves; and, first, in respect to those who pretended to prophecy, and to *dream* prophetic, or revealing, dreams, (on which subject I gave you my sentiments, when speaking of the dreams of Joseph and Pharaoh;) and, next, in respect to particular persons falling into idolatry, and next of whole cities: they were to be destroyed.

The XIVth chapter orders that God's children are not to disfigure themselves in mourning, and treats of animals clean and unclean; of what meats may be eaten, and what not, and of tithing.

The consideration of animals as divided into *clean* and *unclean*, is a most interesting subject, and well deserves greater attention than can be given it at this time; and yet I am unwilling wholly to pass it over. A list of the clean animals is given, and the distinction is laid down, "every beast that parteth the hoof, and cleaveth the cleft into two claws, and cheweth the cud among the beasts, that ye shall eat. Nevertheless these ye shall not eat, of them that chew the cud, or of them that divide the cloven hoof; as the camel and the hare and the coney; for they chew the cud, but divide not the hoof; therefore they are unclean unto you. And the swine, because it divideth the hoof, yet cheweth not the cud, it is unclean unto you: ye shall not eat of their flesh, nor touch their dead carcase." Now it is to be observed, that, the unclean *beasts* were those which we call *beasts of prey*, killing and devouring other

beasts ; and the clean animals were those which live upon grass and herbs, and are of a quiet and peaceable disposition. So, also, among the *birds*, the unclean were the *birds of prey*, the clean were those living upon grain and seeds and berries ; and each set affording, by their *manners*, moral lessons, of qualities, or vices, to be avoided, and qualities, or virtues, to be copied, or followed ; as is abundantly shewn by the use made of them by the sacred writers, and the writers of *fables* both ancient and modern.

But “the animals which were *clean* were also *sacred* ; that is, set apart by the law for the purpose of sacrifice. For, if the worshipper, who offered a beast to God, meant by that act to devote himself, using the animal as his substitute ;”—“then certainly it was not fit that he should represent himself by unclean creatures, whose instincts and manners would convey an odious idea of his own person and character.” And, “as every sacrifice had,” likewise, “its prophetic use, and was prefigurative of the true sacrifice of *Jesus Christ* ; with respect to whom it was necessary that every animal, preferred to this sacred application, should be recommended by every possible character of innocence, purity and perfection : therefore the sacrifices were taken from the three tribes of sheep, goats, and oxen ; each of which were always to be perfect in their kind. The diet of the Hebrews being thus immediately connected with the most solemn acts of religious adoration, the daily course of their living carried with it an exhortation to purity of mind and body, and directed their faith to its greatest object, the vicarious sacrifice of the Messiah.”—“The moral necessities of man can be supplied only by the death and benefits of a propitiatory sacrifice, the common substitute of all man-

kind, whence the Providence of God hath mercifully ordained, as well by the present condition of the natural Creation itself, as by the appointment of Revelation, that his bodily life should be sustained in a like manner: thereby to remind us *every day* (though few are wise enough to accept the admonition) that the life of man is in a state of forfeiture, and that there can be neither the preservation of life, nor the remission of sin without the *shedding of innocent blood*. Thus doth the whole world conspire in offering up a *daily sacrifice*, and attesting the truth of the Christian doctrine, with the same insensibility that *Caiaphas* uttered a similar prophecy in its favour—*It is necessary that one man should die, that the whole people perish not* *.” (John xi. 50.)

Much may be learned on this subject from Jones's Book of Nature, of which many copies have been given away in the parish.

The XVth chapter gives the directions for the year of release, which took place every seventh year, and was binding only upon the Jews, though there is much in the spirit of it, which is applicable to all times and places. The XVIth chapter contains an account of the great Feasts, which, as I have said before, will be considered on Sunday next. The XVIIth orders that things sacrificed must be sound, that all idolaters must be put to death, that hard controversies must be determined by the priests and judges, and what should be the appointment of a king, and his duties, when they had one. In the XVIIIth chapter we have some rules respecting the dues and revenues of the Levites; a caution against the superstitious customs of the heathens; the pro-

* See Jones's Zoologia Ethica, Works in 12 vols. vol. III. p. 34—40.

mise of a great and glorious prophet; that presumptuous prophets were to be put to death; and how they were to be known. The XIXth chapter treats of the cities of refuge, and the privileges belonging to them; that land-marks were not to be removed; that two witnesses at least were required to prove a criminal fact, and that a false witness was to be punished.

At the 14th verse, it says, “Thou shalt not remove thy neighbour’s *landmark*, which they of old time have set in thine inheritance, which thou shalt inherit in the land that the Lord thy God giveth thee to possess it.” And in the XXVIIth, at the 17th verse, when Moses is giving directions respecting the blessings and the curses to be pronounced on mount Gerizim and mount Ebal, when they are in the land of Canaan, he says, “Cursed be he,” or cursed *is* he, “that removeth his neighbour’s landmark.” From this, it should seem, that the Israelites, besides their inclosed fields, had, like *us*, open fields, in which each person’s property was divided, or marked, by a *landmark*; and, to remove this, so as to take away the mark, or to take it up from one place, and set it down in another, so as to take away a part of the property of another, was considered by God as an offence calling for a *curse*; it was *robbery*, and that of a very aggravated kind, as, if not restored, it was a robbery of property year after year, and generation after generation. This is an offence, which, it is to be feared, is not unknown *in these days*; and it may be committed in other ways than that just mentioned. It may be committed by a person holding another person’s land with his own, and removing, or altering, the land-marks, and making changes, of smaller for larger lands, or worse for better; or, when, for

want of documents to vouch for it, withholding property altogether, and saying it is the tenant's own, when it is the landlord's. But property so acquired, we see, has God's *curse* with it; and, to leave it to heirs, is to bequeath them—not property, not an advantage, not a blessing—but *a curse*. And he who possesses *such*, whether the first robber, or the heir, should lose no time to “put away the accursed thing,” (see Joshua vii. 11, &c., Deut. xiii. 17.), and to make restitution to the rightful owner.

Respecting *false witnesses* Moses says, (verse 18) “if the witness be a false witness, and hath testified falsely against his brother; then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his brother: so shalt thou put the evil away from among you. And those which remain shall hear, and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil among you. And thine eye shall not pity; but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.” This was a direction given by Moses from God, to the *priests* and *judges*, what *they* were to do in cases of perjury, or false witness; but the Jews, in our Lord's time,—as appears from Matt. v. 38—42.—applied it to *private injuries*, and carried it to great lengths. He forbade, therefore, what is called the law of *retaliation*, and resistance. Our laws, perhaps, again too-strictly interpreting our Lord's words, have relaxed the punishment of perjury, or false-witness, from death, to fine and imprisonment; but this does not lessen the crime in the eye of God, who will, most assuredly, punish it in another world, if not in this. For, if we consider the true nature of the crime, how aggravated is it! What a mockery of the God upon whom we call to witness the truth of what we say, what an injury to

our neighbour against whom we witness ! In cases of life and death, *the false witness is a murderer*, in cases of property, he is *a robber*, in cases of character, *a slanderer*. He who says what is false, or conceals the truth, who screens the guilty, or helps to injure the innocent, is equally an enemy to truth, to his neighbour, and to God.

The XXth chapter gives the priest's exhortation to encourage the people to battle ; a charge to proclaim peace first to any city they approached, and what cities must be devoted to destruction. The XXIst chapter treats of the expiation of murder, when the slayer is unknown ; the treatment of female captives ; that the first-born son was not to be disinherited from private dislike, and that a rebellious son was to be stoned to death : an awful consideration for rebellious children, in these days, who follow their own wills, regardless of the duty, gratitude, and affection, which they owe to their parents.

The first part of the XXIIId chapter gives some excellent instructions as to our treatment of animals, of what we call dumb creatures, a subject which I have treated at length in Three Discourses on the case of the Animal Creation, and the Duties of Man to them, which I first preached in this church and published nearly ten years ago, and have repeated but a short time before I began these Discourses explaining the Bible. The excellent Jones of Nayland says on this subject, " Cruelty to dumb animals is one of the distinguishing vices of the lowest and basest of the people. Wherever it is found, it is a certain mark of ignorance and meanness ; an intrinsic mark, which all the external advantages of wealth, splendour, and nobility, cannot obliterate. It is consistent neither with true learning nor true civility ;

and Religion disclaims and detests it as an insult upon the majesty and goodness of God ; who, having made the instincts of brute beasts minister to the improvement of the mind as well as to the convenience of the body, hath furnished us with a motive to mercy and compassion toward them very strong and powerful, but too refined to have any influence on the illiterate or irreligious*.”

Great objection has been made to the remainder of this chapter, and it has been asserted that some of the Levitical laws have a manifest tendency to corrupt the imagination. With regard to these regulations, and others of a like nature, we may remark, that what they require might be needful in the *then* situation of the Israelites; and, yet, it is not necessary that *we* should, now, curiously, or impertinently, inquire into them. So far was it from being unworthy of God to leave such things upon record, that it may heighten our admiration, both of his great wisdom and goodness, in his management of that people, who were so extremely perverse, and so given to irregular passions. If, therefore, such passages raise improper thoughts in any one, the fault is in *them*, and *not* in the *Scripture*. Scarcely any thing can be mentioned, of which a bad use may not be made : things the most sacred, may, in this respect, be strangely abused. Nor is it a better argument that the Scriptures were not written by inspiration of God, that there are some parts and passages of it, which may be abused by persons who are ill-disposed, than it is, that the sun was not created by the Almighty, because its light *may* be used by wicked men as an assistant in committing the crimes which they have meditated†.

* Zoolog. Ethica. Works, Vol. III. p. 103.

† See Horne's Introduction, Vol. I. p. 623.

But I must *hasten* on :—The XXIII^d, to the end of the XXVIth chapter, orders who may, or who may not, enter into the congregation ; that uncleanness is to be avoided in the camp ; regulations concerning usury, vows and trespasses,—of divorces, the privileges of a newly-married man, in being exempt from war and civil offices for the space of a year ; of pledges of man-stealing, of leprosy, the hire of a servant, of doing justice to the friendless, of gleanings—concerning law-suits and punishments, of unjust weights and measures, and the order to blot out the memory of Amalek,—the ceremonies to be observed in offering the first fruits, and the covenant between God and the Israelites.

In the XXVIIth chapter, Moses, having repeated the law and enforced the commands and the covenant, that nothing might be left undone that was likely to affect the minds of the people, proceeds to direct to some outward means to promote the remembrance and observance of it ; one was, to write the law upon stones, and set them up on mount Ebal ; the other was, to pronounce a blessing and a curse in a most solemn manner ; both of which were to be done on their first entrance into Canaan.

Of these curses, from the 15th verse, to the end, the *Hebrew* expresses no kind of *wish*, but they are only so many *declarations* of the displeasure of God against those, who, either were, or should be, guilty of the sins therein mentioned, and of the judgments which they must expect to be inflicted upon them, unless prevented by a timely and sincere repentance. And agreeably to this view, the sacred texts should have been rendered “cursed they,” or “cursed *are* they,” and not “cursed *be* they,” in the sense of *Let them be* cursed ; the word *be*, though inserted in our

translation, having nothing answerable to it in the Hebrew. These curses, with some variations, are introduced into our *Commination Service*, which is used, where there is service, on Ash-Wednesday, but they are given there in the form of a *declaration*, not a *wish*, “cursed is he*.”

In the XXVIIIth chapter, the blessing and the curse are branched out into a variety of particulars; and, from the 45th verse, to the end of the chapter, the dispersion and destruction of the Jews by the Romans, for their disobedience, is foretold, and it is as remarkable a prediction, and was as signally accomplished, as any in the Old Testament.

In the XXIXth chapter, we have the renewal of the covenant between God and Israel, and the terrible consequences of breaking it. In the XXXth, mercy is promised to the penitent, and death and life are set before them.

The XXXIst chapter, and to the end of the book, contains the history of Moses himself till his death. He appoints Joshua to be his successor, and delivers a copy of the Law to the Priests, to be kept in the ark, and read aloud to the people every seventh year. A solemn charge is given to Joshua, and the people are called together, to hear the Ode, or SONG OF MOSES, which is one of the noblest compositions in the sacred volume: it contains a justification on the part of God against the Israelites, and an explanation of the nature and design of divine judgments. The beginning is singularly magnificent: the plan and conduct of the poem is just and natural, and almost in the order of an history. It displays

* See Horne's Introduction, Vol. I. p. 632.

the truth and justice of God, his fatherly love, and his unfailing tenderness to his chosen people; and, on the other hand, their ungrateful and rebellious spirit. The ardour of the divine indignation, and the heavy denunciations of judgment, are afterwards expressed in a remarkable figure, which is scarcely to be equalled in all the choicest treasures of poetry. The fervour of wrath is, however, tempered with the mildest beams of mercy, and ends at last in promises and consolations.

In the XXXIII^d chapter, we have a very sublime description of the majesty of God, and the blessing which Moses pronounced on the twelve tribes, and their peculiar happiness and privilege in having Jehovah for their God and protector. With this chapter ends the writing of Moses, and the XXXIVth chapter, as I observed when we began the book, was, probably, added by Samuel, or Ezra, or some one of the prophets; or this chapter; perhaps, originally was the beginning of the book of Joshua. It is too interesting and solemn to be passed by in silence. It is stated towards the end of the XXXIII^d chapter (verse 48.) “And the Lord spake unto Moses that self-same day, saying, Get thee up into this mountain Abarim, unto mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab, that is over against Jericho; and behold the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel for a possession: and die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto thy people; as Aaron thy brother died in mount Hor, and was gathered unto his people: because ye trespassed against me among the children of Israel at the waters of Meribah-Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin; because ye sanctified me not in the midst of

the children of Israel. Yet thou shalt see the land before thee; but thou shalt not go thither unto the land which I give the children of Israel."

"God reminds him of his sin, that he might submit to the appointment more cheerfully; he tells him of Aaron, who was gone before, and was a pattern of patient resignation, and promises him a sight of the good land; this was designed as a favour, and a token that he was reconciled *."

We are, accordingly, told, in the XXXIVth chapter, "And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho. And the Lord shewed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan, and all Naphtali; and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah unto the utmost sea, and the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm-trees unto Zoar. And the Lord said unto him, This is the land which I swear unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither. So Moses, the servant of the Lord, died there, in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. And he buried him in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day. And Moses was an hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated. [And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days: so the days of weeping and mourning for Moses were ended. And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him:

* Orton's Expos. Vol. ii. p. 270.

and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the Lord commanded Moses.] And there arose not a prophet, since, in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, in all the signs and the wonders which the Lord sent him to do, in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land, and in all that mighty hand, and in all the great terror which Moses shewed in the sight of all Israel.”

Thus close we the *Pentateuch*, or five books of Moses, after having been engaged in considering it for seventeen weeks, and which contains the history of about two thousand five hundred and fifty-two years, from the creation of the world, to the death of Moses.

One of the most interesting pieces of profane and ancient history is the account of *The Retreat of the ten thousand Greek soldiers**, in Persia, who, losing their general, and being vanquished in battle, and being towards two thousand miles from their native home, in a country surrounded on every side by a victorious enemy, without money, without provisions, and without a leader, resolved, rather than surrender, to choose a new leader, and make their way home. The account of their retreat is given us by the leader thus chosen. He rose superior to danger, and, though under continual alarms from the sudden attacks of the Persians, he was enabled to cross rapid rivers, penetrate through vast deserts,

* By Xenophon, and given in the Grecian Histories. The author will not pass by this opportunity of recommending *Studies in History*, by *The Rev. Thomas Morell*, both on *Grecian* and *Roman History*, as being written with a true Christian mind. Nor will he withhold his recommendation from his *History of England*, though there are one or two points, towards the end, in which he differs in opinion.

gain the tops of mountains, till he could rest secure for a while, and refresh his tired companions. At last they reached home, after a march of between three and four thousand miles (having been obliged to take circuitous courses) in two hundred and fifteen days, after an absence of one year and three months, and with their numbers reduced, by assaults, diseases, or fatigues, from ten thousand, to eight thousand six hundred.

But what is this to the history of Moses, and his journeyings, written by himself? Born in bondage and exposed on the waters, yet educated in the court of the king of Egypt, and skilled in all the learning of the Egyptians; and, after forty years' residence at court, retiring to a strange country, and leading the life of a shepherd for forty more? Then returning to lead his countrymen from bondage in Egypt, through the wilderness, for another forty years, to a promised land flowing with milk and honey; an army of two millions, with the divine presence leading and feeding them with bread from heaven and a miraculous flow of water: yet the people, thus wonderfully led and fed, continually murmuring, rebelling and falling away from God, to worship idols, and committing every kind of iniquity: till, worn with their rebellions, even Moses himself transgresses before God, and is not allowed to enter the land of promise?

And is he excluded the heavenly Canaan, as well as the earthly? No. He who so often mediated between the offending people and God, has found a still-more-efficacious Mediator, whose merits are a sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. When our blessed Lord was transfigured on mount Tabor, "and his face did shine as the sun, and his

raiment was white as the light, Behold there appeared Moses and Elias talking with him," and "a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him." (Matt. xvii. 2—5.) And, if we hear him, God, for Christ's sake, will forgive us, and receive us into the heavenly Canaan, and we "shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of our Father." (Matt. xiii. 43.)

SERMON XXII.

WHITSUNDAY.—DEUTERONOMY XVI.

THE THREE GREAT FEASTS CONNECTED WITH THE AGRICULTURE OF THE ISRAELITES.

THE FEAST OF PENTECOST, AND GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

DEUTERONOMY XVI. 16, 17.

Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall chuse ; in the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and in the Feast of Weeks, and in the Feast of Tabernacles : and they shall not appear before the Lord empty : every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which he hath given thee.

It is a matter well worthy of our attentive consideration, that the great religious festivals, or feasts, of the Israelites were intimately connected with their ordinary occupations, or life of husbandry. The Feast of the Passover, which was immediately joined to the Feast of Unleavened Bread, so as to make them but one, was at the beginning of barley-harvest. The Feast of Pentecost was at the beginning of wheat-harvest ; and the Feast of Tabernacles, or Feast of In-gathering, as it was, also, called, was at the end of the gathering in of the fruits, as a conclusion of all. That we may understand these the better, I will take a short view of the *seasons* and *agriculture* of the Israelites.

During the year and ten days of the flood, or,

rather, we must say, in which Noah and his family were in the ark, especially the earlier part of the time, all seasons, both of day and night, and summer and winter, must have been confounded; and, accordingly, when Noah and his family and the animals left the ark, and Noah offered a sacrifice, and God entered into covenant with him and all flesh, "the Lord said in his heart," Gen. viii. 21, 22., "I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake," "neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done. While the earth remaineth, *seed-time* and *harvest*, and *cold* and *heat*, and *summer* and *winter*, and *day* and *night*, shall not cease." No mention is made in scripture of *spring* and *autumn*; and, from this passage, we, therefore, divide the *seasons* of the Israelites into *six*, which are here mentioned two and two, taking the *opposites*; but, according to their order, they would be, beginning their year about our October, or Michaelmas, *seed-time*, *winter*, the *cold season*, *harvest*, *summer*, and the *heat*, or *hot season*, each of about two months' continuance.

Barley was the grain first sowed with them, or, at least, it was sowed at such time as to be first ripe. Their climate was warmer, and their soil more fertile than ours. The Paschal Lamb, as we have before seen, was to be killed in the evening of the 14th day of the month Abib, or Nisan, which answered to the latter part of our March and the beginning of April: and this evening of the 14th was in fact the beginning of the 15th, the day being reckoned by "the evening and the morning:" on this day, the 15th, the Feast of Unleavened Bread began; and, after sun-set, they gathered the first sheaf of barley, which was taken into the Temple, and the next day

waved and offered before God,—the type of Christ, the first fruits of the dead. Thus, we see, they always began their harvest on the same day of the month, or year, not varying a month, or more, as we sometimes do, according to the season; but God observed a more especial Providence, or, as it were worked a continued miracle, in reserving for them the appointed weeks, and even day, of harvest.

From this day of offering the first fruits of the barley, they began to reckon the fifty days to the Feast of Pentecost, or Feast of Weeks, which answers to our Whitsuntide, when they began to cut the wheat, and the First Fruits were presented in Two Loaves made with fine flour and leaven. And, probably, during the fifty days between the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Feast of Pentecost, the hay-harvest and sheep-shearing took place, though there is no mention of them, direct or indirect, from which we can ascertain it. It may be noticed, likewise, that mention is made in scripture of “the former,” or “the early, and the latter rain.” (Deut. xi. 14., Hosea vi. 3., Joel ii. 23., James v. 7.) The first was, commonly, during, or at the end of, seed-time, the latter, commonly, between the Passover and Pentecost, to bring on the wheat and the fruits.

The Feast of Tabernacles, or of In-gathering, was held on the 15th day of the month Tisri, or Ethanim, answering to our end of September and beginning of October; when the first fruits of the *wine* and the *oil* were offered, pressed out from the grape and the olive.

It is to be observed, too, that their corn was, for the most part, threshed at the time of harvest, and which lengthened the time of it considerably. It was threshed on a hard threshing-floor, made out in

the field, and was trodden out by oxen, or separated by large instruments of iron with teeth dragged over it. And, thus, in the xxvith chapter of Leviticus 2—12.) we find God making the following promise to the Israelites :

“ Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary : I am the Lord. If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them, then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit ; and your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time ; and ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely. And I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid ; and I will rid evil beasts out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land ; and ye shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword ; and five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight ; and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword. For I will have respect unto you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, and establish my covenant with you. And ye shall eat old store, and bring forth the old because of the new : and I will set my tabernacle amongst you ; and my soul shall not abhor you : and I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people.”

God, then, proceeds to say how he will punish them, in case of their disobedience ; but the passage is too long to cite. I hope you will read the whole chapter over at your own houses this evening : it is the XXVIth of Leviticus : the XXVIIIth of Deuteronomy, also, is well worthy your attention.

WE, too, have Three Great Religious Festivals in the year, *Christmas*, *Easter*, and *Whitsuntide*; but they are not, like those of the Israelites, connected with our worldly pursuits, or agriculture. Our *Easter* answers to their *Passover*, our *Whitsuntide* to their *Pentecost*, both before our harvest begins; but we have no *religious* Festival answering to the *Feast of Tabernacles*, though our Harvest Home is about the same time; and the Israelites had no feast at that season when we celebrate Christmas, or the Nativity of our Lord.

The Feast of Tabernacles, we are informed, from the XXIIId chapter of the book of Levit. (verse 42, 43.) was instituted in remembrance of the Israelites dwelling in Tabernacles, or booths, or tents, when they came out of Egypt, and sojourned in the wilderness. Various conjectures have been made why this feast was fixed for the season of the year when their whole harvest was gathered in: some have supposed, that, at that season, the people could dwell in booths, or tents, with least inconvenience; others, that this was the time when Moses came down a second time from the mount, after the sin of the golden calf. Another opinion is, that this feast was fixed to the time of the year when Christ was to be born; and the dwelling in Tabernacles was designed as a type of this incarnation, as St. John seems to intimate, (i. 14.) “The Word was made flesh, and *dwelt*,” the word literally means pitched his *tent*, or *tabernacled*, “among us* ;” and that Christ was really born at that season of the year†.

* Jones’s Scripture Antiquities, p. 48. See also Hervey’s Letters to Lady Frances Shirley, L. LXIV. Works, Vol. VI. p. 349.

† See Doddridge on Matt. ii. 15, Vol. I. p. 86.

If so, *we* keep a Feast of Tabernacles in our Christmas, though at a different season of the year. Did our custom of putting up boughs of *evergreen* in our churches and houses, at that season, take its rise from the branches of trees, of which *myrtle* was one, (Levit. xxiii. 40. Neh. viii. 15. 2 Macc. x. 7.) used in the Feast of Tabernacles? Does the custom of putting boughs on what we call our Harvest-carts, the last load of Harvest, arise, likewise, from this source? The Month *Tisri*, or Ethanim, which answers to the latter part of our September and beginning of October, was the month in which the Tabernacle of the congregation was set up. (Exod. xl. 2.) The Feast of Tabernacles, by reminding the Israelites of the time when they lived in tents would remind them, likewise, of the time when they had no corn fields to reap, but were fed with a daily supply of bread, or grain, from heaven. Concerning the ceremony of *drawing water* at this feast, I shall have occasion to speak when I come to consider the LVth chapter of Isaiah. Another conjecture is that the Feast of Tabernacles was a type of the final restoration of the Jews*.

Of the *Passover* I spoke at some length on *Easter Sunday*.

The Feast of Weeks, or of *Pentecost*, is so called from a Greek word signifying *fifty*, from the circumstance of this Feast being kept on the fiftieth day after the first day of unleavened bread; that is the morrow after the paschal lamb was offered; and it is called the Feast of Weeks, because it was celebrated seven weeks, or *a week of weeks*, after the first day of unleavened bread, and the feast of barley

* Horne's Introd. Vol. II. p. 726.

harvest, (Levit. xxiii. 15, 16.); and this Feast of Weeks was called also The Day of *First Fruits*, (Numb. xxviii. 26.) because, on this day, the Jews offered thanksgivings to God for the bounties of wheat harvest, in bread baked of the new corn, and in a basket of the first ripe fruits. (Exod. xxiii. 16. Levit. xxiii. 15, &c. Numb. xxviii. 26, &c.) In Deut. xxvi. 5—10. is given the form of thanksgiving for this occasion. This Feast was instituted in remembrance of the giving of the Law from mount Sinai, that spiritual food by which man's soul is nourished, even "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord," (Deut. viii. 3;) and it had a typical reference to the extraordinary effusion of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles, and first fruits of the Christian Church on the Day of Pentecost*.

At these three Feasts all the males who were able to travel were obliged to attend, and such of the women as thought proper attended likewise. Thus, we find Christ, at twelve years of age, attending the pass-over with his parents. They travelled in large companies, or *caravans*, as they are now called in Eastern countries, with tents which they pitched at night to rest in; and every house at Jerusalem was open to receive them. Those who were a convenient distance brought their tithes and offerings in kind, and those who were too far sold them and brought money in the stead.

At these times, when all the males were absent for several days together, (for the feasts mostly lasted eight days, besides the time taken in the journey out and home) and the corn and the fruits were ripe, it was a great temptation to the neighbouring hostile

* Jones's Script. Antiq. p. 44.

nations to make incursions, and take possession of the land, or carry off, or destroy, their corn and fruits, but God expressly promised them, that, at those times, no man should desire their land, (Exod. xxxiv. 24. ;) thus working a continued miracle upon the hearts of their enemies.

With *us* the case is different, we are enjoined no such journeys, we have our *Temple* near at hand in our *Churches*, whither we are to repair to offer our unbloody sacrifices, and make our oblations of prayer and praise and charity.

Of our Three Great Religious Feasts, as far as they are observed religiously, all is very well; but there being no carnal gratifications mixed with them, as eating and drinking and feasting, they are not suited to carnal minds, and the consequence is, that the Church and the table of the Lord, are thinly attended,—almost neglected. But, though the house of God affords no carnal gratifications, yet private houses do, and especially at our Christmas; and gluttony and drunkenness and riot are, too often, the sinful accompaniments of that holy season. The Jews, after their three great Feasts, observed certain days for fasting, on account of the excesses committed at those times.

But, besides these our religious festivals, we have two other—indeed to *us*, in these parishes, situated so close together*, it may be said *three*—which do not partake of a religious nature, our *Feasts* and our *Harvest Home*. The Feasts, indeed, so far *profess* to be *religious*, that they begin upon the *Sabbath*, and some persons attend the public worship; but this is, in most, more for the sake of vanity, of com-

* See Sermon VIII. p. 132, Note.

pany, and shewing fine clothes, than from any motives of piety towards the Great God of heaven and earth, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy, and the blessed Redeemer, who died to save us from the fatal effects of vanity and sin.

The Barley-Harvest of the Israelites began, we see, about the beginning of our April with a religious Feast and offering; and, after seven weeks, they began the Wheat Harvest with another Feast, which would be towards the end of May; and, after about four months more, about the end of our September, was the Feast of In-gathering, or of Tabernacles, at the conclusion of all, a period of six months from the beginning, or half the year.

Our harvest, seldom, at the earliest, begins sooner than about the middle of *June*, with the *hay*: and seldom lasts longer than about the middle of October, with gathering our fruits and roots, a period of about four months. Our church does not prescribe any religious observance of it whatever; and, unless it be by an occasional suitable hymn, or the notice of the minister in his sermon, the season passes on without any public acknowledgments to God, and, we fear, with but little thought of Him, in those to whom the crops belong, or in those who gather them in. And how does it END? In too many instances—I fear we must say in *most*—without any acknowledgments to God, and in rioting and drunkenness. The master of the harvest-feast seems to think it necessary to his character for hospitality, that he should make the men drunk, and the men themselves,—their labours being at an end,—seem to think it necessary, also, on their parts, that they should be drunk: and the next day is often spent in drunkenness in the alehouse, and the streets often present

horrid sights of men and boys wallowing about in a state worse than swine,—I say *worse* than swine, for, though it is said, that the swine, if it have strong drink given it, will drink to intoxication,—yet the *swine* has *no reason*, the *swine* has *no knowledge* of a bountiful God, “who giveth us richly all things to *enjoy*,” and has expressly said, that *drunkards* shall not inherit the kingdom of God. (1 Cor. vi. 10.) And, here, is the difficult point, to enjoy without excess, to rejoice wisely, to feast in the love and fear of God. It is *difficult*, but it should be *attempted*; and, if attempted in the fear of God, it will be certain to *succeed*. Let me, then, earnestly and affectionately, exhort and beseech masters to consider this important point, and, not only, not to think it necessary to make their men drunk, but to be convinced that it is a *sin* to do so; and let the men think that *excess* is *not mirth*, that it is a disgrace to a rational being; and, above all, that it is a sin against God in the very act of his bounty. What an instructive, and holy, and joyous season *might* harvest be made!!

Are *we* a prosperous and a happy parish? Do we seem to have the blessing of God upon us? If not, what is the cause? Let this be a subject for our most serious consideration.

But we must, now, turn our minds to the more particular subject of this day.

In my discourse on the first Sunday in Lent, in considering the building of the tower and idolatrous temple of Babel, and the confusion of tongues, and the dispersion of the idolaters, I noticed the gracious goodness of God, in the gift of tongues to the Apostles on the day of Pentecost, whereby they were enabled to go to all nations, and preach the glad tidings of salvation in their own language.

When our Lord was about to ascend into heaven, he said (Luke xxiv. 49.) “Behold I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.” And he had said before, “the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” And, again, (John xvi. 13—15,) “when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you all things to come. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.” Our Lord had, also, commissioned them (Mark xvi. 15,) to “Go”—“into all the world, and to preach the Gospel to every creature.” But *how* could this be done? How could a few plain Galileans, who had been bred fishermen and carpenters, and had never learned other languages, how could they preach to “every nation under heaven?” to Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, strangers of Rome, Cretes and Arabians, and hundreds of nations besides; how was it possible for these plain Galilean fishermen and mechanics to address them?

Our Lord ascended into heaven, in the sight of his disciples, on that day which we call Ascension Day, or Holy Thursday; and, no doubt, they looked with intense desire for this Comforter and Holy

Guide from above. A Sabbath, and a Lord's day, came; no doubt, they met together to worship that beloved and gracious Master whom they knew to be in heaven. Another Sabbath and Lord's day came, no doubt with their anxiety and desire increased; it was the Day of Pentecost, the day on which the Law had been delivered from mount Sinai, amidst thunders, clouds and thick darkness, and lightnings flashing amidst, and the voice declaring the Law like the sound of a trumpet, exceeding loud,—the apostles had, probably, been reading the Law. "They were," certainly, "all with one accord, in one place," when, "suddenly, there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house, where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven *tongues*, like as of *fire*, and it," that is one, "sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Now, then, the great difficulty in the way of their preaching the Gospel to all nations was overcome. "There were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven." And, "when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded," or astonished, "because every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed, and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak, Galileans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue wherein we were born?" (Acts ii. 1—8.) The consequence was, as you know, that many "gladly received the word and were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." (Acts v. 41.)

This gift of tongues was not confined to the

apostles; but was imparted, also, to the deacons, (Acts vi. 3—8,) to Cornelius and his family, (x. 44, &c.,) to the converts at Ephesus, (xix. 6,) and a variety of others, and was, often, accompanied with a power of working miracles.

The miraculous speaking of diverse tongues, and the working of signs and wonders, we know, now, to be ceased. But, is this account of the gift of the Holy Spirit of no farther concern to us, than as a matter of history, and of the means by which the Gospel has been preached to all nations, and, so, come down to *us*? Yes. It is of the greatest importance to *us*—to every one assembled *here* at this moment, even to the lowest, the most ignorant, to little children,—our Lord expressly said “lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” (Matt. xxviii. 20.) “where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” (Matt. xviii. 20.) and “your heavenly Father shall give the Holy Spirit to them that *ask* him.” (Luke xi. 13.) If, then, you have *not* the Holy Spirit, it is because you do not feel your lost state and your want of him, because you do not *believe* in him, and because you do not *ask* for him. “Ask, and ye shall receive.” (John xvi. 24.)

But, you will, perhaps, say, How are we to know whether we obtain what we ask for? are we to expect the Holy Spirit to come upon us as “a rushing mighty wind?” or an appearance “like as of fire?” No: that was for the extraordinary work of the first preaching of the Gospel. The Holy Spirit descends now silently and unseen into the humble and contrite heart, as our Lord explained to Nicodemus, (John iii. 8.) “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence

it cometh, nor whither it goeth: *so* is every one that is born of the Spirit."

But is there, then, no criterion, no test, no mark, by which we can tell whether we be born of the Spirit? Yes. "Ye shall know them by their *fruits*." (Matt. vii. 16.) "The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth." (Eph. v. 9.) And, again, "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."—"They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." (Gal. v. 22—24.) And this state is not attained in a moment, to a full stature at once, but by a gradual growth, quicker, indeed, in some, than in others.

Would you, therefore, know whether you have the Holy Spirit, and grow in grace—and what knowledge can be more desirable, more important!—ask yourselves, Do I grow in grace?—Am I *better* than I was ten years ago? Am I better than I was a year ago? or three months? Am I more righteous? Do I love God, and Christ, and my neighbour, better than I did? Am I more gentle, meek and temperate? Have I crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts? If your hearts cannot answer *Yes*,—you do *not* grow in grace, you have *not* the Holy Spirit.

And, if you have it *not*,—or, if you have it, and your growth is but slow,—pray for it—pray earnestly,—pray without ceasing—till you obtain it,—and it "abounds more and more." "Behold," says St. James, v. 7, 8, "the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and the latter rain. Be ye, also, patient; stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

And, O blessed Lord, who hast promised a Comforter to guide us into all truth, and to give thy Holy Spirit to them that *ask* it, pour down a plentiful effusion upon *us*, who are “met with one accord” in this place, and let it bring forth in us the fruit of right faith and right practice, to thy honour and glory, now, and for ever.

And now to God, &c.

SERMON XXIII.

TRINITY SUNDAY.—GENESIS I, AND XVIII.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY, BLESSED AND GLORIOUS TRINITY.

GENESIS I. 26.

And God said, Let us make Man in our Image, after our Likeness.

IN my discourse on Septuagesima Sunday, in considering the first chapter of Genesis and the creation of the world, when I came to this verse, I briefly noticed, that the change of expression here, from the authoritative *Let there be*, as “Let there be light,” “Let there be a firmament,” and so forth, to “Let us make Man in our Image, after our Likeness,” was very remarkable; that it was the language of *consultation*, as of great and equal powers, for some important purpose; and that this was considered as shewing that there were more *Persons* than one in the God-head, and that it appeared, on comparing this and other passages of Scripture, that the number of Persons was THREE, and that this was the first intimation of the doctrine of the HOLY, BLESSED and GLORIOUS TRINITY; and that I would consider it more at length on *Trinity Sunday*, when the chapter was again appointed as the first Lesson at morning service. I now proceed to fulfil that promise, and shall shew you, First, that CHRIST created the

world, and that he is God; secondly, that the HOLY GHOST created the world, that he is a *Person*, and that he is God; thirdly, that there are THREE PERSONS in the GODHEAD; and, fourthly, that the GODHEAD is ONE. After that I shall offer a few words in explanation, and conclude with a few practical remarks.

I. 1. Now, that Jesus Christ *created* the world is evident from the first chapter of St. John's Gospel, where we are told, verse 1—3, that, “In the beginning, was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was, in the beginning, with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made.” And this WORD, it appears, from the 17th verse, was JESUS CHRIST.

Again, St. Paul says, Eph. iii. 8—12., “Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see, what is the fellowship of the mystery, which, from the beginning of the world, hath been hid in God, *who created all things by Jesus Christ*: to the intent that, now, unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known, by the Church, the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord; in whom we have boldness and access, with confidence, by the faith of him.”

We consider *two* witnesses as sufficient to establish any fact, or truth. I shall not, therefore, bring more passages on this head, but will refer you, particularly, to St. Paul's Epistle to the Colossians, i. 16.

2. The next passage which I shall produce, will prove, both his *creating*, and his *divinity*: it is He-

brews i. 8—12. “Unto the Son he said, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore, God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. And, thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thine hands. They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old, as doth a garment; and, as a vesture, shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.”

Again, in Isaiah viii. 13, 14., it is said, “Sanctify THE LORD OF HOSTS HIMSELF, and let HIM be your fear, and let HIM be your dread: and HE shall be for a sanctuary: but for a STONE OF STUMBLING and ROCK OF OFFENCE to both houses of Israel.” Now, compare this with 1 Peter ii. 7, 8., “The stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a STONE OF STUMBLING and ROCK OF OFFENCE.” Now, it appears, from the passage from Isaiah, that the STONE OF STUMBLING and ROCK OF OFFENCE is THE LORD OF HOSTS HIMSELF; and it appears, from St. Peter, that it is CHRIST, the same stone which the builders refused, and, therefore, CHRIST is THE LORD OF HOSTS HIMSELF.

Once more, in Isaiah vi. 5., the prophet says, “Mine eyes have *seen* the King, the Lord of Hosts.” And St. John says, in his Gospel, xii. 41., “These things said Esaias, when he *saw* HIS (CHRIST’S) Glory, and spake of *Him*.” Now JESUS is the person here spoken of by St. John; whose *Glory* Esaias is said to have *seen* upon that occasion, where the prophet affirms of himself, that his eyes had *seen* THE LORD OF HOSTS; and, therefore, JESUS is THE LORD

OF HOSTS. We can, therefore, I think, have no reasonable doubt, that Christ created all things, and that, though he hath taken upon himself our nature, yet he is GOD, JEHOVAH, THE LORD OF HOSTS.

We proceed, then, secondly, to prove, that the HOLY GHOST created the world, that he is *a Person*, and that he is God.

II. 1. Now, it is expressly said, in the first chapter of Genesis, and the 2d verse, that “The SPIRIT of God moved upon the face of the waters.” And Job xxvi. 13., “By his Spirit he hath garnished the heavens.” And, again, xxxiii. 4., “The Spirit of God hath made me, and the Breath of the Almighty hath given me life.” The xxxiiid Psalm, and the 6th verse, applies to both the Son and the Holy Spirit, “By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the hosts of them by the Breath,” the Hebrew is Spirit, “of his mouth.”

Again, in the ivth chapter of the Acts, verse 24, 25, we are told, that the disciples “lifted up their voice with one accord, and said, Lord thou art God, which hast made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is; who, by the mouth of thy servant David hast said,” and so forth. But we find, from what St. Peter said, Acts i. 16., that He who spake by the mouth of David was “the Holy Ghost.” The Holy Ghost, therefore, likewise, “made heaven and earth.” And this text, too, shews that he is God: indeed his *creating* proves that.

2. That the Holy Ghost is a *Person*, not a mere powerful energy, or instrument, is evident from his being described in plain Scriptures, as *understanding*, (1 Cor. ii. 10, 11.,) *willing*, (1 Cor. xii. 11.,) *speaking* and *sending messengers*, (Isaiah vi. 8. Acts viii. 29, x. 19, 20. xiii. 1—4. 1 Tim. iv. 1.) as *pleading*

(Rom. viii. 26.) as being *grieved*, (Isai. lxiii. 10. Eph. iv. 30,) as *teaching* and *reminding* persons, (John xiv. 26.) as *testifying* (John xv. 26.) as *reproving* and *executing a commission from God*, (John xvi. 8—14.)

3. That the HOLY GHOST is GOD may be proved at once from the case of Ananias and Sapphira, in the vth chapter of the Acts, where St. Peter says, verse 3, “Satan hath filled thine heart to lie to the HOLY GHOST.” And, in the 4th verse, “thou hast not lied unto men, but unto GOD.”

St. Paul says, 2 Tim. iii. 16, “All Scripture is given by INSPIRATION OF GOD.” And St. Peter says, 2 Ep. i. 21, “Holy men spake as they were MOVED BY THE HOLY GHOST.” Consequently the GOD who inspired the Scriptures is THE HOLY GHOST.

Again, St. Paul says, 1 Cor. iii. 16, “The *Temple of God* is holy, which temple are *ye*.” But, afterwards, he says, 1 Cor. vi. 19, “Know ye not, that *your bodies* are *the Temple* of the HOLY GHOST.” Consequently the GOD who has his Temple in the body of man,—of regenerated man,—is THE HOLY GHOST.

Once more, The Prophet Isaiah, vi. 1, 3, says, he saw THE LORD OF HOSTS. And, at verse 8, that he heard “the voice of the LORD, saying, Go and tell this people, Hear ye, indeed, but understand not,” and so forth. (verse 9.) But these very words, St. Paul tells us, Acts xxviii. 25—27, were spoken by THE HOLY GHOST, “Well spake the HOLY GHOST, by *Esaias* the prophet, unto your fathers, saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing, ye shall hear, and shall not understand,” and so on. Whence, it is plain, that THE HOLY GHOST is THE LORD OF HOSTS.

It were easy to multiply proofs on all these heads,

but these must suffice. I will, however, observe, that, as we have seen GOD, and CHRIST, and the HOLY SPIRIT, uniting in the *Creation* of the World, so, when the world was to be *destroyed* by the Flood, for its wickedness, the same three Holy Persons were concerned, and took their respective parts, or offices. Moses says, Gen. vi. 3, that “the Lord said, My SPIRIT shall not always strive with man.” So that the Holy Spirit did strive with man, to keep him from running on in his wickedness. And St. Peter says, 1 Eph. iii. 18—20, CHRIST “hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by THE SPIRIT. By *which*” that is, by which SPIRIT, “also, he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a-preparing.” So that, it appears, while God, in his mercy and long-suffering, was delaying to destroy the world, CHRIST, by the HOLY SPIRIT, preached to those, who were, *then* living souls, or persons, upon earth, but, when Peter wrote, “spirits in prison,” that is, in the place of punishment of the disobedient, or wicked.

I proceed, now, to prove in the *third* place, that there are *Three Persons* in the *Godhead*.

III. And, indeed, this is already done to our hands, for, if, besides GOD THE FATHER, we have proved THE SON to be God, and the HOLY GHOST to be God, then are there *Three Persons* in the GODHEAD, unless it could be shewn that there are *more*, but *that* no one has ever attempted to prove. There are, however, several passages of Scripture, which are perfectly satisfactory, and especially, that form

of words by which Christ ordered his Apostles to admit converts into the Christian Church, Matt. xxviii. 19, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST."

Again, 2 Cor. xiii. 13, "The grace of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and the love of God, and the Communion of THE HOLY GHOST be with you all."

Where, it is to be observed, that the *order* of the persons is changed, and *Christ* is put *first*; and, in the next text I shall quote, *the Holy Ghost* is put *first*, showing, that all are equal; and, as our Athanasian Creed expresses it, "none is afore, or after other," but either of them may be mentioned first, or last.

This text is, 2 Thes. iii. 5, "The Lord"—And, if you will turn to Luke ii. 26, it is said, "it was revealed unto him," that is to aged Simeon, "by the *Holy Ghost*, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ:"—"And he blessed God, and said LORD, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to *thy word*." This *word*, therefore, was the *word* of the *Holy Ghost*, who is the LORD to be praised and blessed. Let us turn, then, again, to 2 Thes. iii. 5, "THE LORD," that is the *Holy Ghost*, "direct your hearts unto the love of God," that is the *Father*, "and into the patient waiting for CHRIST."

I should rest the proof of the *Three Persons* in the Godhead upon these passages; but our Church has appointed the XVIIIth chapter of the Book of Genesis as the first Lesson at this evening's service, and it is, by us, considered as a manifestation of the Holy Trinity. I will, therefore, make a few observations upon it.

It will be right, however, to notice, first, that the mode of speaking made use of by the Creator in the formation of man, is not peculiar to that place, for, in the iiiid chapter of Gen. verse 22, after man had eaten of the forbidden fruit, “the LORD God said, behold man is become like ONE OF US.” And, Gen. xi. 6, 7, on the building of Babel by the idolatrous descendants of Ham, the Lord said—“let us go down, and there confound,”—the Hebrew is “let us confound,”—“their language.”

But, to proceed to Abraham and the appearance to him : God had already spoken and appeared to Abraham in different ways, (xii. 1. 7. xiii. 14. xv. 1. 4 xvi. 1.) and, now, “he sat in the tent door, in the heat of the day : and he lift up his eyes, and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him :” they had the general form, or appearance, of *men*, but, still, there was something *remarkable*, something different from the common *appearance* of men, for, “when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself towards the ground.” When St. John bowed, and would have worshipped the *angels* in the Revelation, (xix. 10. xxii. 9.) each said “see thou do it not, for I am thy fellow-servant.” And when Cornelius met Peter, Acts x. 25, 26, “and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him,”—“Peter took him up saying, stand up : I myself, also, am a man.”

These, then, were not mere created men, or angels, who accepted this worship. And Abraham “said, MY LORD, if, now, *I have found favour in thy sight*, pass not away, I pray thee, from *thy servant*.” Nor is this the language of a man to mere strangers travelling past his habitation. Is it not, rather, the address of an inferior being, to a superior, with whose appearance he is acquainted, and whom he knows to

be worthy of all honour and worship? "The Lord God," we know, had been accustomed to "walk" in the garden of Eden, in the days of Adam's innocence, and converse freely with him. (Genesis iii. 8.) It is generally supposed it was the Messiah, by whom the world was made, who condescended to appear in some veiled, or angel, or human form. And this circumstance had, no doubt, been handed down, by tradition and description, from the father of the human race, even if the Lord had not, as yet, appeared thus to Abraham. Abraham and Sarah made preparations, and served their guests with a meal; and the Persons conversed, the inspired historian using the expressions "they said," and "he said," the persons shewing a knowledge of the inmost thoughts of Sarah's heart, and saying, "Is any thing too hard for THE LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee."—"And the men rose up from thence, and looked towards Sodom: and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way. And THE LORD said, shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do." and so forth. And the Lord said, "Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I will go down, now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto *me*; and, if not, I will know:" and, verse 22, "*the men* turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before THE LORD." Abraham's intercession for Sodom is well known: He calls THE LORD with whom he converses, (verse 25.) "the Judge of all the earth."

The XIXth chapter begins with informing us, that "there came *two angels* to Sodom at even, and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot, seeing them, rose up to meet them, and he bowed himself with

his face towards the ground; and he said, Behold now, my Lords, turn in, I pray you, unto your servant's house." Here the two persons, who were called before (xviii. 22.) *man*, are now called angels, have a peculiar appearance, are worshipped by Lot, and called "my Lords." The inhabitants of Sodom, however, look upon them as mere *men*. The Angels, or men, say to Lot, v. 13 "*we* will *destroy* this place." At v. 14, it is said, "the Lord," Jehovah, "will destroy this city." v. 15, it is said, "*the angels* hastened Lot;" and, verse 16, "while he lingered, *the men* laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters, the Lord," Jehovah, "being merciful unto him; and *they* brought him forth, and set him without the city." When Lot interceded for Zoar, it is said, verse 21, "he" that is the angel, the Lord, "said unto him, See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing, that I will not overthrow this city for which thou hast spoken. Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither." Comparing this with what had been said before by The Lord who conversed with Abraham, we must suppose, either that *that* Lord, or angel, has now rejoined the other two, or else, that here was another—and two others—of equal rank and power, the Lord, Jehovah, able to destroy and to spare. And, though the account is not without its *difficulties*, yet, I think, we may fairly infer, that this was a manifestation to Abraham, and, perhaps, to Lot, also, of the ever-blessed Trinity, veiled in the human, or angel, form; or, else, angels commissioned to *represent* the Godhead, of which the first, or chief, was the angel of the covenant, the representative of God the Father, his place being, also, represented by an angel.

The occasion of this *appearance*, or *mission*, was one of the first importance. It was to announce, to promise, the wonderful birth of Isaac, him from whom God's peculiar people were to spring, who was himself a type of the Messiah, and from whom the Messiah was descended. It was, also, to announce the destruction of Sodom, for which Abraham mediated, that type of the judgment of sinners by "the judge of all the earth," and their condemnation to "the vengeance of eternal fire." (Jude, verse 7.)

One other passage seems to demand our attention, the account of the baptism of Christ, appointed for the second lesson at this morning's service. (Matt. iii. 13—17.) While John was publicly baptizing in Jordan, Jesus came "to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus, answering, said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for, thus, it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And JESUS, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw THE SPIRIT OF GOD descending like a dove and lighting upon him. And, lo, A VOICE FROM HEAVEN, saying, This is my beloved SON, in whom I am well pleased." Here was a very solemn manifestation of the Three Holy Persons, the son, "God manifest in the flesh," the HOLY SPIRIT manifested in the form of a dove, or, as some expositors suppose, in *fire* in the *form* of a dove, or merely as *fire*, hovering as a dove hovers: but, if the *Son* is pleased to be represented by a *Lamb*, the most innocent of four-footed beasts, why should not *the Spirit*, (represented, we know, by breath, air, wind,) be represented, also, by *the most innocent of the feathered tenants of the air*, "that is covered

with silver wings, and her feathers like gold." (Psalm lxviii. 13.) Here was, also, the voice of GOD THE FATHER from heaven.

IV. It will require but few words to shew, that, though there are Three Persons in the Godhead, yet there is but one God. The passage already quoted from the xxxiiid Psalm, verse 6, "By the WORD of the LORD were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the BREATH" (the Hebrew, as I said before is SPIRIT) "of his mouth:" will prove this, if compared with Isaiah xlv. 24, "I am the LORD that maketh, that stretcheth forth the heavens ALONE, that spreadeth abroad the earth BY MYSELF." Here, then, it is evident, that all the *Three Persons* created the world, and that these *three* are the ONE ALONE LORD and CREATOR.

Again, Deut. vi. 4, it is said, "the Lord our God is ONE LORD." The original is ONE JEHOVAH. And, again, Psalm lxxxiii. 18, "Thou whose name ALONE is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth." But CHRIST is JEHOVAH, Jerem. xxiii. 6, "This is the name whereby he shall be called, JEHOVAH our Righteousness." So is the SPIRIT, also, Ezek. viii. 1, 3, "The Lord JEHOVAH put forth the form of a hand, and took me,—and the SPIRIT lift me." Therefore, the FATHER, the SON, and the HOLY GHOST, are the ONE JEHOVAH: they are *Three Persons*, yet have but *one name* and *one nature*.

V. It were desirable, now, to make some remarks upon this doctrine, to offer some sort of explanation, or illustration; but the subject being difficult, and the time pressing, I know not that I can do better than by repeating THE ATHANASIAN CREED, which, perhaps, you will attend to with more complacency, when divested of what are called its *damnatory*

clauses; and I will just state, before hand, that it was intended more as a *denial* of the false notions of heretics, and to guard against them, than as an *explanation* of what is in itself above our comprehension, as all things about the infinite and eternal Godhead must be. But the Scripture says it is so, therefore, we are bound to receive it with humility and thankfulness. You will, perhaps, like to turn to *The Athanasian Creed in the Prayer Book*. It stands next before *The Litany*. We will begin at the third clause, or verse:

“The Catholic Faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; neither confounding the persons, nor dividing the substance. For there is one person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all *one*; the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal. Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost: the Father uncreate, the Son uncreate, and the Holy Ghost uncreate. The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, the Holy Ghost incomprehensible. The Father eternal, the Son eternal, the Holy Ghost eternal; and, yet, they are *not three* eternals, but *one* eternal. As, also, there are not three incomprehensibles, nor three uncreated; but *one* uncreated, and *one* incomprehensible. So, likewise, the Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty, and the Holy Ghost Almighty; yet they are *not three* Almighties, but *one* Almighty. So, the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God; and yet they are *not three* Gods, but *one* God. So, likewise, the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Ghost Lord; and, yet, *not three* Lords, but *one* Lord. For, like as we are compelled,

by the Christian verity, to acknowledge every person, by himself to be God and Lord; so, are we forbidden, by the catholic religion, to say, there be three Gods, or three Lords.

“ The Father is made of none, neither created, nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone; nor made, nor created, but *begotten*. The Holy Ghost is *of* the Father, and *of* the Son; neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but *proceeding*. So, there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts. And, in this Trinity, none is afore or after other; none is greater, or less than other; but the whole three Persons are co-eternal together, and co-equal. So that, in all things, as is aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped.”

The Creed, then, proceeds to state what is the right faith concerning the *Incarnation* of our Lord Jesus Christ:

“ Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man; God of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds; and Man, of the substance of his Mother, born in the world; perfect God, and perfect Man; of a reasonable soul, and human flesh subsisting; equal to the Father, as touching his Godhead, and inferior to the Father as touching his Manhood. Who, although he be God and Man; yet he is *not two*, but *one* Christ; *One*, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh; but by taking of the Manhood into God; One altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of Person: For, as the reasonable *soul* and *flesh* is *one Man*; so God and *Man* is *one Christ*, who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead, he ascended into heaven, he sitteth on the

right hand of the Father, God Almighty; from whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies, and shall give account for their own works. And they that have done good, shall go into life everlasting, and they that have done evil, into everlasting fire."

VI. But I must hasten to conclude with a few practical remarks.

The doctrine of the Trinity in Unity is a magnificent, a glorious, and a sweet and comfortable doctrine. How wonderful to think, that there should have existed from ETERNITY, from EVERLASTING, all-powerful, all-wise, and all-good, a GODHEAD, consisting of THREE PERSONS, distinguished as FATHER, SON and HOLY SPIRIT, and yet all united in substance, in nature and in will! That their power, wisdom and goodness have, no doubt, been exerted from all eternity, and yet, that, less than *six thousand years* ago (a moment, a nothing, in respect to ETERNITY) this glorious Godhead created this world in which we live, and placed Man in it innocent and happy, in a state, in which, had he lived in obedience to the will of his Creator, he had been removed to another still more beautiful and happy; but yet man disobeyed his Creator, and forfeited his inheritance, and became subject to death and everlasting punishment: and, then, still more wonderful to think, that the Second Person in this glorious Godhead, condescended to undertake his redemption, to die for him and his sinful posterity, condescended to take upon him man's nature, and to live upon earth to instruct him in his duty and the knowledge of God, and to suffer the death of a malefactor in his place, to reconcile him again to his Creator, and

bring him to the happiness which he had forfeited ! That the Third Person in this holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity takes a part in this blessed work, and assists, strengthens, and sanctifies, to make man a fit inhabitant of heaven !

These are considerations upon which we can never reflect with sufficient awe, wonder and thankfulness. The glorious Godhead who *created* us, are all anxious and active for our *redemption*—more anxious *for us*, than *we* are *for ourselves*.

When our blessed Lord, before his ascension, commanded his disciples to “ Go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST,” he added, “ He that *believeth*, and is *baptized*, shall be *saved*, but he that *believeth not*, shall be *damned*.” So that here, at once, *life* and *damnation* are set before us ; let each one lift up his heart, and say, “ Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief ;” (Mark ix. 24.) make my heart to believe unto life, and my mouth to make confession unto salvation. (Rom. x. 10.)

And, now, to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, the Holy, Blessed, and Glorious Trinity, Three Persons in One Godhead, be ascribed, as is most due, all honour, and glory, and praise, and thanksgiving, now, and for ever and ever. *Amen.*

SERMON XXIV.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.—JOSHUA I.—XXIV.

THE HISTORICAL BOOKS—THE BOOK OF JOSHUA—JOSHUA—THE ISRAELITES PASSING OVER JORDAN—TAKING OF JERICHO—THE GIBEONITES—THE DAY MIRACULOUSLY PROLONGED—THE BOOK OF JASHER—CONQUEST OF CANAAN—MONUMENT OF THE REUBENITES, &c.—JOSHUA'S EXHORTATION.

JOSHUA xxiii. 8.

Cleave unto the Lord your God.

HAVING gone through the Pentateuch, or five books of Moses, we come next to what are called *The Historical Books*, which are *twelve* in number, beginning at *Joshua*, and ending with *Esther*. They are called so, probably, because they contain the only *history* which God hath given of his church, from the time that Israel entered into Canaan, to the time when they returned to it again after their captivity in Babylon. The first seven of these books are called, by the Jews, *the former prophets*, probably, because they treat of the more ancient times of Jewish History, and because they are most justly supposed to have been written by prophetic men. The events recorded in these books occupy a period of almost one thousand years, which begins at the death of Moses, and ends with the great national reform brought about by Nehemiah, after the return of the Jews from Babylon.

It is evident, from an examination of the historical books, that they are *collections* from the authentic records of the Jewish nation: and it seems, that, though the substance of the several histories was written under divine direction, when the events were fresh in memory, and by persons, who, it is evident, were living at the time the transactions took place which they have recorded, yet, that, under the same direction, they were disposed in the form, in which they have been handed down to us, by some other person, long afterwards, and, probably, all by the same hand, and about the same time. The learned and pious commentator Matthew Henry thinks it not unlikely, that the historical books to the end of Kings, were compiled by the prophet Jeremiah, a short time before the captivity. The remaining five books, from the first of Chronicles to Esther, he thinks it still more probable were compiled by Ezra the scribe, some time after the captivity; to whom uninterrupted testimony ascribes the completion of the sacred canon, or collection of books. But, although we cannot determine with certainty the *authors* of the historical books, yet we may rest assured that the Jews, who had already received inspired books from the hands of Moses, would not have admitted any others, as of equal authority, if they had not been fully convinced, that the writers had been divinely assisted.

The Book of Joshua is so called, because it contains an account of the acts of Joshua the son of Nun, who had been the minister of Moses, and succeeded him in the command of the children of Israel. Some suppose it to have been written by Joshua himself, some by Jeremiah, and others by Samuel. But, whoever was the author of it, it is manifest, that

it was compiled from ancient and authentic documents. The example of Moses, who committed to writing the events of his own time, leads us to expect that some continuation would, necessarily, be made, not only to give an account of the remarkable fulfilment of those promises, which had been given to the patriarchs; but to preserve a memorial of the division of the land of Canaan among the particular tribes, as a record for future ages; and, thus, prevent disputes and civil wars, which, in process of time, might rise between powerful and rival tribes.

The Book of Joshua, according to some, comprises the history of about seventeen years; others say twenty-seven, or thirty years. Josephus says, that Joshua survived Moses twenty-five years. He died at the age of one hundred and ten; and, if, to the twenty-five years which he survived Moses, we add the forty which the Israelites were in the wilderness, which make sixty-five, then he must have been forty-five when they came out of Egypt. "That he was a man of good experience in the affairs both of war and peace, appears from his being employed about the person of Moses, and, as we say, *his right hand*; appointed by him to be captain of the army against the Amalekites, over whom he obtained the victory; admitted to the second place of approach to the Divine Majesty at Mount Sinai, (Exod. xxiv. 13,) and sent, among others, to discover the condition of the land of Canaan, which he" and Caleb, "reported with such fidelity, that God blessed him for it, and gave him an immediate assurance that he should enter into it *."

As the land of Canaan is, in the New Testament,

* Reading, Vol. II. p. 358.

considered as a type of heaven, the conflicts and trials of the Israelites have been considered as shadowing forth the spiritual conflicts of believers in every age of the Church. Although Joshua, whose piety, courage, and disinterested integrity are conspicuous throughout his whole history, is not expressly mentioned, in the New Testament, as a type of the Messiah, yet he is universally allowed to have been a very eminent one. Their names were the same, *Joshua* in *Greek* is *Jesus*. He is called so, Acts vii. 45, and Hebrews iv. 8 *. Jones of Creaton says, “When you read of what he was to Israel, you read of what the true Joshua is to the universal church. Joshua was captain of the Lord’s hosts : a leader and commander of the people : sent of God, and qualified for his office. He led Israel to battle, subdued their enemies, and made them triumph. He conducted them to the promised land, and gave it them as their inheritance for ever. In all these things we are instructed what Jesus is to us, and what benefits we may derive from him as the head of the church. Moses brought Israel from Egypt, through the wilderness, to the borders of the promised land, and died. Thus, “the law is our school-master to bring us to Christ : but only Jesus, the true Joshua, brings us into God’s promised rest †.”

The Book of Joshua may be conveniently divided into *three* parts ; First, the history of the conquest of Canaan by the Israelites, the 1st to the end of the XIIth chapter ; secondly, the division of the conquered land, the XIIIth to the XXIIId chapter both included ; and, thirdly, the assembling of the people, the dying address and counsels of

* See Horne’s Introd. Vol. IV. p. 26—34. † Script. Direct. p. 31.

Joshua, his death and burial, in the XXIII^d and XXIVth chapters.

We will proceed, then, to consider the contents more particularly. In the 1st chapter, a fresh commission and encouragement is given to Joshua, and directions for his own personal conduct. He begins to execute his orders, and the people profess their allegiance and readiness to comply with them. The following words of God to Joshua he speaks, also, by this book, to persons in all times and all stations: “Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it, to the right hand, or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for, then, thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and, then, thou shalt have good success. Have not I commanded thee? Be strong, and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed; for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.” This part of the chapter, the 1st to the end of the 9th verse, is appointed as the first lesson, at morning service, on the anniversary of our King’s accession, as an exhortation to him, to be strong and very courageous in the Lord.

In the II^d chapter we have an account of Joshua’s sending two spies to view the land, of their being received and concealed by Rahab; the covenant between her and them; and their return and report to Joshua. Rahab is called, here, and in the New Testament, (Heb. xi. 31.,) *an harlot*; but the word properly signifies *an hostess*, or *inn-keeper*.

If she had been an harlot, she was now reclaimed ; for her discourse and covenant with the spies shews her fear of God. She, afterwards, married Salmon, of the tribe of Judah, and was the mother of Boaz, who was great-grand-father of David, and one of the ancestors of the Son of David, our blessed Lord.

The III^d chapter gives an account of the Israelites passing over Jordan, the priests carried the ark, and, as soon as their feet touched the water, as the waters of the Red Sea divided to let them pass through, so the waters of Jordan divided ; and it was the more remarkable, as it was the time of barley-harvest, about the passover, the end of our March, or beginning of April, when the river always overflowed its banks from the melting of the snow on mount Lebanon. The priests, when they had got to the middle of the bed of the river, stood still, while the Israelites passed over at a distance on each side.

The IVth chapter relates that, after all the people were passed over Jordan, Joshua, at God's command, ordered twelve men, one from every tribe, to return to the middle of Jordan, where the priests stood with the ark, and take every man a large stone, and carry it to the place where they encamped that night, in Gilgal, and lay them there, as a memorial, or monument, of that wonderful event. And, as soon as the priests came out of the channel of the river with the ark, the waters returned to their usual flow and overflow.

It was foretold by Moses, in his Song on the deliverance of Israel from the Egyptians, by their safe passage through the sea and the overwhelming of their enemies, that " The people shall hear, and be afraid : sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of

Palestina." (Exod. xv. 14.) And, now, we are told, in the Vth chapter of Joshua, that, when all the kings of the Amorites and the Canaanites on the side of Jordan westward, "heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel,"—"their heart melted, neither was their spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel."

The rite of circumcision having been neglected by the Israelites in the wilderness, it was, now, renewed, and they kept the passover, and the feast of unleavened bread, on the following day, with bread made of the corn which they found in the land; and, having corn from the earth, the grain from heaven, the manna, ceased to descend daily to them.

As Joshua was viewing Jericho, he saw one in appearance as a *man*, but one who received worship from him, and said, that, as the Captain of the Lord's host, he was come, to shew that the Lord would fight for him.

When the spies returned to Moses after viewing the land of Canaan, they said that there were "cities walled up to heaven;" (Deut. i. 28.) that is, with very high and strong walls. Such, probably, was Jericho, and the king and the inhabitants trusted in them, and thought it impossible that the city should be taken. But what are walls, however high and solid, against the will of God! In the VIth chapter, Joshua, at the command of God, directs the Israelites to march round the city once, for six days; seven priests blowing rams' horns, the instruments, not of warriors, but shepherds; and, on the seventh day, to compass it seven times, and shout; when the walls fell down, and the city was their own; and they who might have saved their lives by submis-

sion, are put to the sword, save only Rahab and her household. The scarlet cord at the window, like the blood on the doors of the Israelites in Egypt, was a token to the destroying sword to *pass-over* the believer in the Lord.

As Jericho was taken by faith and obedience, so Ai was lost by disobedience, as we learn in the VIIIth chapter, where the story of Achan is related, his covetousness, the detection of it, the stoning of him, his family, and his property, and, then, consuming them with fire.

That which had prevented Ai from being taken being now removed, in the VIIIth chapter, God returns to Israel in mercy, and we hear of the stratagem by which it was taken; and of Joshua, afterwards, erecting an altar in mount Ebal, and writing the Law on stones, and pronouncing the blessings and the curses, as he had been commanded by Moses, as we read in the xxviith and xxviiiith chapters of Deuteronomy.

In the IXth chapter, we have the account of the contrivance by which the Gibeonites made a peace with Israel; but, the deceit being discovered, Joshua, having *promised*, agrees to spare their lives, upon condition of their living in perpetual servitude, and hewing wood and drawing water for the service of the tabernacle and the temple.

This conduct of the Gibeonites gave great offence to the neighbouring cities, and five of the kings leagued together to smite the Gibeonites in revenge; of which we have an account in the Xth chapter, the first lesson at this morning's service. The Gibeonites applied to Joshua for succour, and he and his army went up from Gilgal all night, and surprised and overcame the confederate kings, so that they

fled, and the Lord cast great hailstones * upon them and slew them ; and, as the day seemed to be declin-

* To persons who have seen only the usual appearance and effects of *hail*, in this country, this account may appear very improbable, that is, the means very inadequate to the effect. But we have well-authenticated accounts of the great devastations caused by *hailstones* in our own times. In Cheshire, Lancashire, &c. April 29, 1697, a thick black cloud, coming from Caernarvonshire, disposed the vapours to congeal in such a manner, that, for about the breadth of two miles, which was the limit of the cloud, in its progress for the space of sixty miles, it did inconceivable damage, not only killing all sorts of small animals, but knocking down horses and men, and even splitting trees and ploughing up the earth. The hailstones, many of which weighed five ounces, and some half a pound, and being five or six inches about, were of various figures ; some round, others half round, some smooth, others embossed and notched ; the icy substance of them was very transparent and hard, but there was a snowy kernel in the middle of them. In Hertfordshire, May 4, the same year, after a severe storm of thunder and lightning, a shower of *hail* followed, which far exceeded the former : some persons were killed by it, their bodies beat all black and blue, and vast oaks were split. The stones measured from ten to thirteen or fourteen inches about. (Philosoph. Trans. No. 229, and Encyc. Brit. Art. *Hail*.) On Sunday the 13th, of July, 1788, about nine in the morning, without any eclipse, a dreadful darkness suddenly overspread several parts of France. It was the prelude of such a tempest as is unexampled in the temperate climates of Europe. Wind, rain, *hail*, and thunder, seemed to contend in impetuosity ; but the *hail* was the great instrument of ruin. Instead of the rich prospects of an early autumn, the face of nature, in the space of an hour, presented the dreary aspect of universal winter. The soil was converted into a morass, the standing corn beaten into a quagmire, the vines broken to pieces, the fruit trees demolished, and unmelted hail lying in heaps, like rocks of solid ice. Even the robust forest trees were unable to withstand the fury of the tempest. The hail was composed of enormous, solid, and angular pieces of ice, some of them weighing from eight to ten ounces. The country people, beaten down in the fields on their way to church, amidst this concussion of the elements, concluded that the last day was arrived ; and scarcely attempting to extricate themselves, lay despairing and half suffocated amidst the water and the mud, expecting the immediate dissolution of all things. The storm

ing, and the conquest and slaughter was not yet complete, Joshua, who knew that the Lord fought for them, and that all creation was subject to his will and word, said, no doubt, *in faith*,—You will recollect what our Lord said to his disciples, Matt. xvii. 20.—“If ye have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye shall say to this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.”—Joshua, then, in a *lively faith*, said, “Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and, thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed,”—we are told that it might be translated, “the *light* of the sun continued, and the *light* of the moon continued,”—“until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies.” Probably, according to our present knowledge, the earth stood still, or did not turn round, which made the Sun and Moon *appear to rest*; or else, perhaps, the sun, instead of what we call *setting*, kept moving above the horizon, until such time as it began to rise again the next morning*.

was irregular in its devastations. While several rich districts were laid entirely waste, some intermediate portions of country were comparatively little injured. One of sixty square leagues had not a single ear of corn, or fruit of any kind left. (Encyc. Brit. Art. France. Vol. IX. p. 111.)

Such are what we call the *natural* effects of hail. What, then, must have been those hailstones caused *miraculously* by God, for the defence of his own people, and the destruction of his enemies. We are told, in the Revelation, (xvi. 21.) of “a great hail”—“every stone about the weight of *a talent*,” that is one hundred and twenty-five pounds. What tremendous instruments can the almighty God make of any of his works!

* Taylor, in his “Fragments” annexed to Calmet’s Dictionary, has some “Considerations on Joshua’s Miracle of staying the Sun and Moon,” which are, certainly, well worthy of notice, and an ab-

A learned writer has shewn, that both the *sun* and *moon* were *worshipped* in Canaan, and that there is

strait of them may not be unacceptable to the general reader. He remarks, first, that the Hebrew word, *shemesh*, in our translation called the *sun*, means the *light* issuing from the sun, not the *body* of the sun itself; that *irech*, what we translate the *moon*, signifies the *light* reflected from the moon; and that *cheji*, what is translated *the midst of heaven*, means *the division*, or *the horizon*. There are two words used to denote the *delay* of these lights: DUM, *stand thou still, stay*; the word expresses evenness, being *level*; that is, suppose the sun being near the edge of the horizon, its rays shining on the hill of Gibeon, appeared level, and parallel to the plane of the earth, to the general extended country then within the spectator's view, and the words may mean "Solar rays, *shoot level* upon Gibeon:" the use of this word strongly describes the evening time of the day; for the Solar rays can be *level* only morning and evening: and this miracle did not happen in the morning. The word used to express that "the moon *stayed*" is OMED; that is *continued*,—subsisted—was sustained, or supported in the same condition—maintained itself,—that is *stood* equally bright and luminous during the whole time of the miracle: not in the same place; but in the same power, effulgence. He, next, inquires, as Joshua, probably, saw both these luminaries at the time he addressed them, *first*, at what period of the moon's course could such an address take place? *Secondly*, having ascertained the age of the moon,—what time of the day does that imply? And, *thirdly*, what was the time of the year? To the *first* inquiry, he replies, that the time when the moon could be thus addressed is restricted to her second quarter, *nearly*, but not quite *full moon*, and to the *second*, in the *evening*, perhaps, about seven o'clock. As to the *third* inquiry, the time of year, Joshua crossed the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, answerable to about our 5th of April. The first passover was held the fifteenth day of the first month, April 10. Allow for the taking of Jericho, of Ai, the ceremonies at Ebal, &c. two months; which brings us to the 10th of June. If this be not thought enough, add another month. The time, then, was about midsummer, or a little later. Now, for some weeks before and after midsummer, the sun is in his highest northern station; where he seems to continue without variation, so that, at this time, many days together are of apparently equal length; and, at this time, he never sinks below the horizon sufficiently to suffer total darkness, or night, in our own climate; and the same effects

good reason to think, that there was an idolatrous temple to the sun at Gibeon, and one to the Moon at Ajalon*. And it is probable, that, besides the giving opportunity to the army of Israel to destroy the Canaanites, the miracle was wrought to wean the Gibeonites and surrounding nations from their idolatry, and to guard the Israelites from the danger of their example. The Canaanites had, probably, been sacrificing and praying to these their deities for success

follow, in proportion to difference of latitude, in Judea. The longest day at Jerusalem is about fifteen hours: to this add a twilight of an hour and a half; which, doubled, for evening and morning, makes three hours; in all *eighteen hours* of *natural* light: so that, to maintain the solar light, during the remaining *six* hours, until it would *naturally* have risen again in the morning, would answer the nature and the purposes of this miracle. These "Considerations" are accompanied by a Plate, which is, at once, a *map* of Joshua's course, and a dial to shew the course of the sun and moon, and the length of the *natural* day, and what portion of prolonged light was required. There is, however, a seeming contradiction in Mr. Taylor's statement; at p. 292, (Ed. 1823, vol. iii.) he makes the day light *twenty-four hours* long, but, p. 299, he talks of his *dial* "ascertaining what proportion of time was required to unite the *last* day-light of the preceding day, with the *first* day-light of the subsequent day: in order to unite the two days into one continuation of light; which interval between these two periods of light, (*i. e.* the foregoing evening and the following morning) is the time of the duration of this miracle." But this will make the continuation of day-light, not only twenty-four hours, from about half past four, one morning, to the same time, the next; but, also, from that time, to half past seven, or sun-set of the next day, that is, 24+15, or 39 hours, besides the twilight. This method would do least *violence* to the general *course of nature*, against which *Objectors* make so great a cry. It makes a longer day, or no night, for once, in Judea, and only, a shorter and darker mid-winter day in the opposite hemisphere; and effectually serves to shew to the Canaanites, that the heavenly luminaries, their *gods*, are under the control of Joshua, when assisted by Joshua's God.

* Bryant's Observations on Passages of Scripture, p. 169, 179.

before they prepared for the attack ; and we may suppose the purpose and chief design of Joshua's address, as the rays of the setting sun were gilding the turrets of the temple dedicated to his worship at Gibeon, to be a wish and prayer to the true God, as well as a command to the idols, " God of all victory, may thy people, from this instance of thy superiority, be confirmed in their duty, and worship thee alone. And may the Gibeonites, by this display of thy power, be weaned from their idolatry, and see the inferiority of their base deities. May the Sun be compelled by thee to linger in the horizon, shining on the temples of Gibeon, and the Moon to stand over the valley of Ajalon, that these two greatest deities of the nations beholding, as it were, the overthrow of their votaries, may bear witness to their own impotence, and thus proclaim to all the earth, —' The Lord, he is the God ; the Lord, he is the God*.' " And, it is probable that the effect was produced ; and that this " city became one of the places of worship held in the highest religious repute ; for, thither Solomon repaired, after having sacrificed in the city of David ; there being here a high place dedicated to God : and here people made their vows, which was esteemed excusable, before the temple was built at Jerusalem." (1 Kings iii. 2—4.) And his offerings were accepted, for " in Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream ;" and, among other gifts, conferred upon him the greatest of blessings, *wisdom*, (verse 5 and 12.) Hence, it is evident, " that the Gibeonites were made proselytes, and that

* See the British Critic's Review of Bryant's Observations, Vol. XXV. p. 53.

their idolatrous city became a place of the greatest sanctity, next Shiloh and Jerusalem*.”

In respect to “the book of Jasher,” mentioned Joshua x. 13, and, again, 2 Samuel i. 18, various opinions have been formed; but what is said of it by Josephus seems to be the best account †, that it was composed of certain records (kept in a safe place at that time, and, afterwards, removed into the temple) which contained an account of what happened to the Jews from year to year, and particularly of the sun’s standing still, and also directions for the use of the bow, (2 Sam. i. 18.) that is, directions for instituting archery, and maintaining military exercises. So that, this was not the work of an inspired person, but of some common historian, who wrote the annals of his own time, and might, therefore, deserve the name of *Jasher*, or the *upright*, because what he wrote was generally deemed a true and authentic account of all the events and occurrences which had then happened ‡. Bishop Lowth is of opinion, from the style of it, that it was a poetical book, a collection of Sacred Songs, composed at different times and on different occasions, and was no longer in being when the author of Joshua and Samuel lived and wrote §. It seems, that, towards the end of the two days in which the sun did not go down, Joshua and his army encamped at Makkedah, (see verse 21,) when he slew the five kings who had hid themselves in a cave, and hanged them, and buried them in a cave, as stated in the passage to the end of verse 28; and then, in another expedition, taking up some time,

* Bryant’s Observations, p. 255. † Antiquities, B. V. c. II.

‡ Horne’s Introduction, Vol. I. p. 136.

§ Horne, Vol. IV. p. 35.

but at once, he took Libnah, Lachish, Eglon, Hebron, Debir, Kadesh-Barnea, Gaza, and all the country of Goshen, (of course *not* the Goshen in Egypt,) and, then, returned to the great camp at Gilgal near to Jordan.

The XIth chapter gives an account of the conquest of the northern parts of Canaan. The Lord had restrained the people till Israel was refreshed, and fit to begin another campaign.

The XIIth chapter gives a general summing up of the victories of the Israelites over the Canaanites, under Moses and Joshua; and the XIIIth contains an account of the land unconquered, a command to divide the land on the west side of Jordan, and an account of the two tribes and a half on the other side Jordan.

In the XIVth chapter, we have a general account of the manner in which the land was to be divided between the nine tribes and a half on *this*, or the west, side of Jordan; and Caleb's claim of Hebron—or, rather the country about Hebron, for *that* was a city of refuge, and belonged to the Levites,—which was granted.

The XVth chapter, to the end of the XXIst, gives an account of the division of the land, which was done by Lot, according to the direction of Moses from God, Numbers xxvi. 55, 56, “This was the best method of doing it, as it was acknowledging God's right to the land, and leaving it to his disposal; it was the way to prevent murmuring, and to make them content; and it would make it evident that the prophecies of Jacob and Moses concerning the situation of the several tribes were from God*.”

* Orton, Vol. II. p. 341.

In the XVIIIth chapter we are informed of the setting up of the Tabernacle at Shiloh, in the XXth the appointment of the six cities of refuge, and in the XXIst eight and forty cities are given, by Lot, out of the other tribes, to the Levites, and God gives the Israelites rest.

The XXIIId chapter gives an account of a very remarkable transaction. The tribes of Reuben and Dan, and half the tribe of Manasseh, when on the other side of Jordan, had desired of Moses, that they might have their possession there, to which Moses agreed, upon condition that the fighting men accompanied their brethren over Jordan, and helped them to get possession of the land of the Canaanites, and that, then, they might return to their wives, children and possessions. This the Reubenites, Gadites, and half of the Manassites fulfilled punctually ; and, now that the land was sufficiently conquered to divide it, they depart for their homes. As soon as they have got over Jordan, into the land of Gilead, they erect a building, or monument, which appears to their brethren in Canaan to be an *altar* ; and, thinking that it is for the purpose of sacrifice and worship, and that their brethren are forsaking the One True God and falling into idolatry, perhaps that of Baal-peor, they resolve to march against them, and put them to death, as it had been commanded by Moses, Deut. xiii. 15, that they should do, in such a case. Careful, however, not to do any thing *rashly*, they send a deputation, or embassy, consisting of Phineas, the son of Eleazar the priest ; and a prince from each of the tribes, who remonstrate with them. The Reubenites and their companions are equally prudent and forbearing on their part, they

make no resistance, they give no angry words, they observe no haughty silence: they *explain* what is the real state of the case, that it is, *not* an *altar* for sacrifice, but as a *monument*, or *witness*, that they were of the same people, and belonged to the same God with their brethren in Canaan. This answer, not only satisfied, but pleased, Phineas and his companions, and they departed in peace.

What an example is here, in all cases of supposed aggression or difference! Had such conduct always been followed, how many millions of cases, which have ended in strife and bloodshed, might have been resolved into peace and friendship.

[It may be proper here to notice that there is some misplacing of the chapters, or different parts, of this book, from the order of time in which the events happened, which was occasioned, probably, by the ancient way of rolling up the book, or parts of a book, on a stick or roller, as I have before explained to you*; and that, if read according to the order of time, they should be read thus: the Ist chapter to the end of the 9th verse,—then the IId chapter,—then chapter Ist verse 10 to the end of the chapter,—then chapter IIId to the end of the XIth chapter,—then chapter XXII,—then chapter XII, to the end of chapter XXI,—and, lastly, chapters XXIII and XXIV.]

The XXIIId chapter, the first Lesson at this evening's service, states, that "it came to pass, a long time after that the Lord had given rest unto Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua waxed old and stricken in age. And Joshua called

* See Sermon, I. p. 3., II. p. 28., V. p. 71.

for all Israel,"—It is generally thought the place was Shiloh, where the ark was, and at one of the three great feasts, when all the males assembled there:—"and he said unto them, I am old and stricken in age:" and he, then, reminded them of what the Lord had done for them, and says,—verse 6.—"Be ye, therefore, very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom, to the right hand, or to the left; that ye come not among these nations, these that remain among you; neither make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause to swear by them, neither serve them, nor bow yourselves unto them; but cleave unto the Lord your God, as ye have done unto this day." He goes on to remind them of what God had done for them; that all good would come upon them, if they were obedient, and all evil, if they were disobedient.

Joshua, it seems, survived longer than he expected, and changed his abode; and, probably, the tabernacle and ark were removed likewise to Shechem; and, probably, it was at one of the great festivals also, that "he gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem," as related in the XXIVth chapter, "and called for the elders of Israel, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers; and they presented themselves before God." Joshua was, now, an hundred and ten years old, and might be called *the Father of Israel*, venerable alike for his age and his piety. He reminds them of what God had done for them, even from the call of Abraham, and exhorts them to put away all evil and all idols, and says,—verse 15,—"Chuse you this day whom you will serve;—but, as for me and my house, we will serve

the Lord." "And the people said unto Joshua"—verse 24—"The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey. So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem."

The latter part of the chapter and book, from the 29th verse, was, as I have already stated, written by some other hand, and gives an account of the death and burial of Joshua, of the depositing of the bones of Joseph, which had been brought out of Egypt, in the burying ground of Jacob, and the death and burial of Eleazar the priest.

I will conclude with a few words of exhortation :

If Joshua had ground to address his people, and remind them of all the goodness of God, and the mercies and blessings which he had bestowed upon them, how much more has the Christian and the Protestant minister cause for reminding his people : That we have the light of the Gospel, and professed in this country in the purest form of any nation upon earth : that it has pleased God to lead us out from the errors of popery : that we "have God so nigh unto us," that we are not forbid to read his word, but have it in our places of public worship, in our houses, in our hands, and may, and ought to, have it in our hearts ;—that we are made the instruments of dispersing this light to them "who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death," that—as to temporal blessings—we live in "a land flowing with milk and honey," abounding in all good things : that we enjoy the blessings of civil liberty, that we may "go out and come in," and "none can make us afraid :" that each regenerate person, in his individual capacity, may reflect that he is redeemed

from the bondage of sin and Satan by the blessed Saviour, the Moses and the Joshua, that he is brought into “the glorious liberty of the sons of God,” sanctified by the Holy Spirit, and made an “heir of everlasting salvation.” “**CLEAVE,**” then, “**UNTO THE LORD YOUR GOD.**”

SERMON XXV.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.—JUDGES I—XXI.

THE BOOK OF JUDGES—ADONI-BEZEK REQUITED—THE ANGEL
REPROVING—THE DEATH OF EGLON—DEBORAH AND BARAK—
Jael BLESSED ABOVE WOMEN—JEPHTHAH AND HIS DAUGHTER
—SAMSON—MICAH'S IDOLATRY—THE LEVITE AND HIS CON-
CUBINE—LESSON FROM THE WHOLE.

JUDGES iv. 1—3.

And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord, when Ehud was dead. And the Lord sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor, the captain of whose host was Sisera, which dwelt in Harosheth of the Gentiles. And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord: for he had nine hundred chariots of iron; and twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel.

THE BOOK OF JUDGES is so called from its containing the history of the Israelites, from the death of Joshua, to the time of Eli, under the government of *Judges*, before they had any king. The number of Judges mentioned in the book are *thirteen*; but it is most probable that they did not all follow in succession, and ruling over the whole land, or people, but that some of them ruled at the same time, but over different districts or countries. These Judges were men of what is called an *heroic*, or *great*, spirit, raised up by God out of the several tribes to govern the people, and to deliver them from those evils and dangers, which, by their sins against God,

they had brought, or were about to bring, upon themselves. The Judges frequently acted by a divine inspiration, or moving; and were endowed with courage and strength more than human; and it is necessary to bear this in mind, when reading the account of some of their great exploits, which are to be received and justified only on the supposition of their being performed under the sanction of a divine warrant, which sets aside the general rules of conduct.

There is a difference of opinion as to the person by whom the book was written. But the best founded opinion seems to be, that it was written by the prophet *Samuel*, the last of the Judges; and in this the Jews themselves agree.

There is great difficulty, too, as to the *time* of which it gives an account; but the best expositors seem to think, that it contains the history of about three hundred years. It may be divided into three parts, or portions; the first gives the history of the *Elders*, who ruled the Israelites after the death of Joshua, and the events to the beginning of their troubles,—the 1st chapter to the end of the 4th verse of the 3rd chapter. The second part contains the history of the judges from Othniel to Eli, from the 5th verse of the 3rd chapter, to the end of the 16th chapter; and the third, which relates several memorable actions, performed not long after the death of Joshua,—is contained in that portion beginning at the 17th, to the end of the 21st chapter, is put at the end of the book, that it might not interrupt the thread of the other history.

This book forms an important part of the history of the Israelites. It furnishes us with a lively description of an unsettled nation; a striking picture

of the disorders and dangers which prevailed in a country, where there were no regular magistrates; “when the highways were unoccupied, and the travellers walked through by-ways,” (verse 6.); when few prophets were appointed to control the people, “and every one did that which was right in his own eyes.” (xvii. 6.) It exhibits the contest of true religion with superstition; displays the beneficial effects that flow from the former, and represents the miseries and evil consequences of impiety: it is a most remarkable history of the long-suffering of God towards the Israelites, in which we see the most signal instances of his justice and mercy alternately displayed. The people sinned, and were punished; they repented, and found mercy. It is astonishing how often it is said, “And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord—and the Lord sold them into the hands of their enemies—and the people cried unto the Lord,—and the Lord heard them.” (ii. 11. iii. 7, 12. iv. 1. vi. 1. viii. 33. x. 6. xiii. 1.) Something of this we find in almost every page; and these things are written for *our* warning. None should *presume*, for God is JUST; none need *despair*, for God is MERCIFUL.

From the scenes of civil discord and violence which darken this history, St. Paul—Heb. xi. 32;—has presented us with some illustrious examples of *faith*, in the characters of Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah*.

We will proceed to consider the contents more particularly.

The 1st chapter gives an account how, some time after the death of Joshua, when the Israelites found

* Horne's Introd. Vol. IV. p. 36—39.

themselves straitened for room, on account of the increase of the Canaanites, that Judah and Simeon fought against them, and they slew of the Canaanites and Perizzites ten thousand men, and took Adoni-bezek, that is the lord, or king, of Bezek, prisoner; and, probably, having heard what he had done to the kings whom he had taken prisoners,—and knowing God's command to magistrates against transgressors, (Levit. xxiv. 19, 20.) “if a man cause a blemish in his neighbour; as he hath done, so shall it be done to him again; breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; as he hath caused a blemish in a man, so shall it be done unto him again.”—they, therefore, cut off his thumbs and his great toes. And, now, hear the confession of Adoni-bezek, (verse 7.) “Threescore and ten kings, having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, gather their meat under my table;” he treated them like dogs, and, perhaps, at some of his great festivals, he used to send for them,—as the Philistines did to Samson—and make sport with them; and he added, “As I have done, so God hath requited me:” I acknowledge his justice and my own guilt. And how often does God now remarkably suit his punishment to our guilt, if we would but observe it. In the words of our great dramatic poet,

“in these cases,
We still have judgment here; that we but teach
Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return
To plague the inventor: thus even-handed Justice
Commends the ingredients of our poisoned chalice
To our own lips*.”

When we suffer any infliction, it is always useful

* Macbeth, Act I. Scene vii.

to us to reflect, and ask ourselves, "Have I ever done any thing to deserve this?" Happy they whose consciences do not accuse them! How many have cause to say with Adoni-bezek, "As I have done, so God hath requited me."

In the remaining part of the chapter we have an account of the taking of Jerusalem and Hebron.

In the second chapter a particular message is sent to Israel by an Angel, probably the same that had appeared to Joshua at Jericho, (Josh. v. 13.) to reprove them for not having driven out the inhabitants of the land, and for making marriages with them, and following their gods, and, then, follows a general summary of the whole book, an account of their idolatry, their punishment, and their deliverance.

In the third chapter we read of the enemies which God left, or rather permitted them to leave, to prove Israel, and the mischief which they occasioned; the deliverance of Israel from Chushan-rishathaim by Othniel, the first judge, and from the Moabites by Ehud; and the success of Shamgar over the Philistines.

The case of Ehud, in what we should now call *assassinating*, Eglon, king of Moab, is one of those acts which, as I have said before, we must not consider as an example for us to follow now. He did it at the instigation of God, under whose peculiar government he was the vice-roy; and such peculiar instigations, or revelations, are not the course of his providence now.

The IVth and Vth chapters, the first lesson at this morning and this evening service, and from the first three verses of the first of which I have taken my text, give the very interesting account of God's delivering up the children of Israel into the hands of

Jabin, who was king of that part of the country where the people, properly called Canaanites, inhabited, and was, afterwards, known by the name of Galilee. This Jabin was descended from a king of the same name, whom Joshua slew, and burned his capital city Hazor down to the ground, as we read in Joshua xi. 11. But the Canaanites rebuilt it, and restored their kingdom with such a strong hand, that this second Jabin had nine hundred chariots of iron, that is chariots for war with large iron scythes extending from the axle-tree, on each side, to mow down their enemies ; and the Israelites were forbidden to use horses, and, consequently, chariots, in war ; so that an enemy thus provided had,—humanly speaking,—an immense advantage over their adversaries. At the end of twenty years, the God of Israel, according to his usual compassion, heard their cry, and looked down with a tender regard upon the affliction of his people, and began their redemption by the hand of Deborah, a prophetess, who being the mouth of God to the people under the oppression of Jabin, and having the revelations of the Holy Spirit communicated to her, how they should be delivered, she sent and called Barak, a brave soldier, out of Kadesh-Naphthali, a city of the Levites, and a city of refuge, in the upper Galilee ; and asked him what he thought of a Revelation which she had from God, appointing him to raise ten thousand men out of Naphthali and Zebulun, and lead them to Mount Tabor, where Jabin's whole army should give them the meeting, and should all fall and perish before them. Barak disputed not the commission, but declared himself ready to execute it, only upon condition, that the prophetess would accompany him, thinking that he should thereby be more certain of the presence of the Lord

also. Deborah complied with his request, but told him, that, since he would not undertake this expedition without the assistance of a woman, he would lose the honour of taking Sisera, Jabin's general, who should fall by a woman's hand.

Being thus agreed to act together, they began to levy their forces at Barak's own city, and quickly raised an army of ten thousand good men, which they led to Mount Tabor, as directed. Josephus says they encamped *near* this; others think they ascended to the *top* of it. Tabor is a round, high and very steep mountain in the plain of Galilee, separate from other mountains, about six miles distant eastward from Nazareth, and is commonly supposed to be the place of our Saviour's transfiguration. It has a plain at the top, of an oval figure, about a quarter of a mile in length, and half as much in breadth. This is the computation of a modern traveller, though Josephus makes it a great many furlongs larger. The Israelites' army being encamped at mount Tabor, the news of it was soon carried to Sisera, who, with great expedition drew out his nine hundred chariots, and a proportionable number of foot to attend them, and came up with the Israelites at mount Tabor. Here Sisera might think he had them at a great advantage, for, if they were in the mount, though his chariots could not ascend such a steep mountain, nor could his foot attempt it without great annoyance from above, it is probable that he would encompass it at the bottom, and stop all the ways to it, so that no provisions might be carried to Barak and his men, and they might reduce them by famine: and, if they were in the plain, then the chariots armed with scythes would have their full play and do prodigious slaughter.

But, as we have, more than once before, had occasion to observe, “it is in the mount of difficulty that the Lord is seen.” (Gen. xxii. 14.) It was when the Israelites were on the shore of the Red Sea, encompassed by mountains, and the Egyptians pressing in their rear, that deliverance was at hand, so it was in this strait that Deborah called upon Barak to arise, and lead down his men to battle, “for this,” said she, “is the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thy hand. Is not the Lord gone out before thee?” This she speaks, as if she had seen, as probably she did, the whole fortune of the day, and scene of action, represented to her in a spiritual vision: as if she had heard the voice of the *thunder* and seen the vollied *lightnings* shot from heaven on the heads of the Canaanites. It is said, chapter V. verse 20, “They fought from heaven, the stars in their courses fought against Sisera.” What is intended by this we cannot exactly say; but, as, in the case of Joshua and the confederate kings, (as I shewed in my discourse on Sunday last) those Canaanites worshipped the sun and the moon, and there was a temple to the sun at Gibeon and one to the moon in the valley of Ajalon; and the sun and the moon continuing their light, while Joshua pursued his victory, shewed, that the God of Israel was superior to the gods of Canaan; so, perhaps, here was a similar rebuke to Sisera and Jabin and their army. Moses had warned the Israelites, Deut. iv. 15, 16, 20, “Take ye good heed unto yourselves”—“lest ye corrupt yourselves”—“and lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and, when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the *stars*, even all the host of heaven, shouldst be driven to worship them and serve them:” so, probably, the *stars*, or *host of heaven*,

were worshipped at Hazor and Harosheth, and God so ordered things now, that it appeared to the Canaanitish army as if the stars fought against them. Henry, in his Commentary, says, the Chaldee paraphrase reads this verse, "From heaven, from the place where the stars go forth, war was waged against Sisera." And, then, he explains it, "The power of the God of heaven was engaged against him, making use of the ministration of the angels of heaven. Some way or other the heavenly bodies, not arrested, as when the sun stood still at Joshua's word, but going on in their courses, fought against Sisera. Those whom God is an enemy to, the whole creation is at war with. Perhaps the flashes of lightning, by which the stars fought, was that which frightened the horses, so as that they pranced till their very hoofs were broken, (verse 22.) and probably overturned the chariots of iron which they drew, or turned them back upon their owners." These considerations will give additional interest and force to some of the passages in the Song of Deborah and Barak. For the Lord's going out before Barak intimates, that he began the fight by storm and tempest against Sisera's chariots, which lying in the valley at the foot of mount Tabor, where was the channel of the river Kishon, this river, small in itself, overflowed so suddenly, by the violent rains, as is not unusual in those hot mountainous countries, (and this was an especial flooding) that it drowned the heavy chariots before they could make their escape from it. And, at this crisis, Barak and his men falling upon them, put them to flight, and had the chase and slaughter of them to their chief city, Harosheth of the Gentiles. The chariots of Sisera, in which he trusted, were now, then, become the

greatest hindrance, and he alighted out of *his*, that he might escape with the greatest swiftness and secrecy. How he came into the tent of Jael the Kenite, and how she accomplished upon him the prophecy of Deborah is well known.

This act of Jael is censured by some, and not without an appearance of reason, as an act of treachery, and a breach of hospitality. It is said, chapter IV. verse 17, that "there was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite." But, by the word *peace*, is, probably, meant only *no hostility*; and the Kenites were more bound to the Israelites, as being a-kin, by Jethro the father-in-law of Moses; they had come with them into Canaan, and they were bound to *them* as the people of God. It is said that Sisera fled to the tent of Jael. He, probably, asked, or demanded admittance; "and she went out to meet Sisera, and," being afraid to refuse what he asked, she "said unto him, Yes, Turn in, my Lord, turn in to me, fear not." Had she denied, or shewn any marks of aversion, he would, probably, have put her to death. Sisera, "said unto her, Stand in the door of the tent, and it shall be, when any man doth come and inquire of thee, and say, Is there any man here? that thou shalt say, No." To this it does not appear that she gave any answer, or made any promise.

It now occurred to her, and that, probably, by the suggestion of God, by his Holy Spirit, that she had the general of the king of Canaan, who had for twenty years so mightily oppressed the children of Israel, the people of God, completely in her power, and that one blow would be of most important consequence, and she, accordingly, struck it. It had been foretold by Deborah, that it would be done;

and she pronounces her “blessed above women” for doing it. We must acquiesce. The God and Giver of life has a right to take it again, whenever he thinks proper, either by his ordinary method, whatever that may be,—for we do not know,—or by his destroying angel, or by the hand of man, as in the case of Zimri and Cozbi, and of Agag. It behoved Jael, before she committed such an act, to be well assured that she had the commission of God. The *blessing* pronounced upon her by the prophetess of God, leaves us no doubt of the lawfulness of it. Yet David, afterwards, when he had Saul, who was seeking his life, as completely in his power, and was urged, by his companions, to avail himself of the opportunity of revenging himself, and securing his safety, and his throne, did not consider *this*, or any *other* case, as a sanction to such a deed.

In respect to *ourselves*, to men in *these times*, we know that God has said, “Thou shalt do no murder,” “Thou shalt not kill.” We know we have no ground now to expect such a commission from heaven. When Thistlewood and his associates purposed to assassinate our ministers, they did not pretend to any such commission, or impulse. No. They even doubted the existence of a God and a judgment to come.

The Song of Deborah and Barak is an ode, or hymn, or anthem, equal to that sung by Moses and Miriam and the people, on their deliverance from the Egyptians at the Red Sea, and was sung, probably, in alternate verse and chorus, “Awake, awake, Deborah.”—“Arise, Barak”—“So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord; but let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might.”

The time will not allow us to dwell upon the his-

tory of Gideon, contained in the VIth, VIIth, and VIIIth chapters, nor of that of Abimelech in the IXth chapter, nor on the government of Tola and Jair in the Xth.

But the history of Jephthah and his daughter, in the XIth, is too important to be wholly passed over, though it might rather require a discourse by itself; and, indeed, there are excellent ones already written by Romaine, by Randolph, and by Simeon.

Our poets and our painters have contributed much towards forming and perpetuating the erroneous ideas which prevail upon the subject. The Greek poets in the story of Iphigenia, and an English poet in the oratorio of Jephthah; and painters have frequently represented the father as the sacrificer, or murderer, of his own daughter.

You, no doubt, recollect the case, the Ammonites invaded the Gileadites, and Jephthah went out to oppose them, and, verse 30, 31, he “vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, If thou shalt, without fail, deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands, then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord’s, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering.” God gave him success; and, on returning to his house, his daughter with her companions met him with timbrels and dances. He rent his clothes, and his daughter being informed of his vow, she desired to be allowed two months that she might bewail her virginity; at the end of which time, she returned, and, it is said, verse 39, “he did with her according to his vow.”

On reading this account there arises a very difficult question, What Jephthah did with his daughter?

There are two opinions on the subject. One is, that she was really made a burnt-offering; the other, that she was doomed to perpetual virginity, and consecrated to the service of the tabernacle, was employed in work relating to it, and spent her days in religious solitude there. The history is doubtful. In verse 31, the *marginal reading*, in our Bibles, is, "that which cometh forth of the doors of my house, shall surely be the Lord's, or I will offer it up for a burnt-offering." A learned commentator says "Or I will offer a burnt-offering." And, in the 40th verse, the margin reads, instead of "the daughters of Israel went yearly to *lament* the daughter of Jephthah:" "They went from year to year to *talk* with her." This shews that our translators were very uncertain about the matter. The most common opinion is, that she was *not slain*, but devoted to the service of the tabernacle. The reasons for this opinion are, that the vow must imply, that what came out of his house was *fit* to be offered. Had it been a dog, or an ass, it would have been an affront to the God of Israel to offer it. If it was not fit to be offered, he might redeem it, according to the law in Levit. xxvii. 4.; and, therefore, he would certainly do it in the case of his only child. But he would so far fulfil his vow as to deprive himself of having any posterity by her. If it be alleged, that he had no power thus to doom her to virginity, it is answered, Much less had he power to sacrifice her; and what he did, it appears was with his daughter's consent! The vow of Hannah, afterwards, 1 Samuel i. 11., may illustrate this. She was childless, "And she vowed a vow, and said, O Lord of Hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but will give

unto thine handmaid a man-child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life." Now this vow must *imply* three things, first, that the man-child had no defect in his body or mind, for, if he had, he could not wait upon the Lord, (Levit. xxi. 17—23.); secondly, that her husband gave consent; and, thirdly, that the child, when he came to years of discretion, himself consented, for the Levites served only for twenty-five years, (Numb. viii. 24, 25.,) and, then, became judges, or preachers of righteousness, but this child was to serve all the days of his life, and be a Nazarite from the womb.

Another argument that Jephthah's daughter was not sacrificed, is, That she bewails, not her *death*, but her *virginity*; a trifling circumstance, if she had but two months to live: and the daughters of Israel going yearly to *talk* with her,—or, as another commentator proposes to translate it, *to make presents to her*,—shews that she was *alive*. And in the last place, one cannot suppose that the apostle Paul would have celebrated Jephthah, as he does, Hebrews xi. 32, if he had been guilty of *sacrificing* his daughter*.

In the XIIth chapter we have an account of a quarrel between the Ephraimites and the Gileadites; of the death of Jephthah; and notice of three other Judges that God raised up for Israel.

In the XIIIth and three following chapters we have the history of Samson, famous on account of his strength given him by God for the avenging of Israel upon the Philistines, and infamous for his forsaking God on account of the Philistine women.

The XIIIth gives an account of the visit of an

* See Orton, Vol. II. p. 445.

Angel to his mother, who announces to her the birth of a son : he appears again to her and to her husband Manoah, who discover that he is an angel ; and, in due time, Samson is born.

In the XIVth chapter, we have the foundation of his sorrows laid in an unsuitable marriage with a Philistine woman, the riddle which he proposed at the marriage feast, the deceitful conduct of his wife in discovering it, and the first of his exploits against the Philistines.

In the XVth chapter is related the manner in which Samson set fire to the corn-fields of the Philistines. Of the Philistines, in revenge, burning the house of the Timnite, the father-in-law of Samson, with him and his daughter in it. Of his being delivered up, by the men of Judah, to the Philistines at Lehi, of his bursting the cords which bound him, and, taking up the jaw-bone of an ass, slew with it one thousand men. Samson did not give the glory of this action to God, but boasted of it as his own exploit ; when, a great thirst coming upon him, he prayed to God, who caused water to spring up for his refreshment.

A learned writer, whom I have several times had occasion to refer to, and particularly in respect to the worshipping of the *ass* at Pethor, where Balaam dwelt, says, that, at Lehi, also, the ass was worshipped ; and it was, probably, on account of a sacrifice offered to this deity, that the Philistines were met together, and that it was from the head of a sacrificed animal that he took the jaw bone with which he did so much execution ; the God of Israel making it, in his hands, an instrument of punishment for their idolatry. It was, perhaps, on Samson's throwing this down and its striking the ground, that the

water sprang up; not from the jaw-bone, but, as the margin of our Bible has it, in *Lehi**.

The XVIth chapter gives an account of Samson's disastrous connection with harlots; of Delilah's getting from him the secret of his strength, and betraying him, the Philistines taking him, and putting out his eyes, and condemning him to grind at the hand-mill; of the feast made to their god Dagon, and sending for Samson to make them sport; his praying to God for a renewal of his strength, and employing it to pull down the temple upon all the assembled worshippers of Dagon.

The history of the acts of the judges and governors of Israel ends with the XVIth chapter. The chapters which follow contain, as I have already stated, an account of some memorable events, which happened in their time, or, rather, before it; but were not related in their place, that the writer might not interrupt the history. It is generally thought that they happened between the death of the elders and the first judge, near three hundred years before Samson's time. In the XVIIth chapter we have an account of Micah's making an idol god and procuring a Levite to officiate as priest. In the XVIIIth chapter is the history of the expedition of the Danites against Laish, of their calling by the way at the house of Micah, and stealing his god and enticing away his priest, and setting up the idol at Laish, which was from thence called Dan, and was the most northern boundary of the land of Israel.

The XIXth and two following chapters, which conclude the book, give an account of the horrible

* See Bryant's Observations on Passages of Scripture, and the review of it in the British Critic, Vol. XXV. p. 46.

conduct of the Benjamites towards a Levite, and one who is called his *concubine*, but who was, probably, his *wife*, and the punishment which was inflicted upon them by the other tribes, in the destruction of almost the whole tribe, and the strange and unwarrantable method which was taken to repair the loss.

The important lesson, then, to be derived from this book is, that “God alone is the Fountain of all Happiness; and he will force all the world, sooner or later, to acknowledge this. He gives us all timely Evidences and Demonstrations of this Truth, if we will but open our eyes to see them. Every outward calamity and distress, every bodily pain and distemper, every trouble and grief of spirit, shew us what poor empty creatures we are of ourselves, and how unable to subsist, if not supported by the good hand of God.”

“Let us, then, above all things, labour after a well-grounded dependence upon his Fatherly Care and Blessing; let us dutifully confess that nothing in Heaven or Earth can help us without him; and let us beseech him to keep us under the Protection of his good Providence, and make us to have a perpetual Fear and Love of his Holy Name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. To whom, &c. *”

* Reading's Sermons, Vol. II. p. 384.

SERMON XXVI.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.—RUTH AND 1 SAMUEL
I—VIII. VERSE 3.

RUTH—THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL—ELKANAH, HANNAH AND SAMUEL—ELI AND HIS SONS,—DAGON, OR NEPTUNE—SAMUEL AND HIS SONS.

1 SAMUEL III. 10.

And the Lord came, and stood, and called, as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak ; for thy servant heareth.

THE Book of Judges occupied our attention on Sunday last. THE BOOK OF RUTH follows it, which is generally considered as an appendix, or supplement, to it, and an introduction to the Books of Samuel: it is, therefore, placed, with great propriety, between the books of Judges and Samuel. It takes its name from *Ruth* the Moabitess, whose history it relates. It was probably written by the prophet Samuel. It is not certain at what time the events recorded in the book happened, but it is most probable that it was during the time that Gideon was judge, or about the year of the world 2759, before Christ 1241.

The object of this book is, principally, to give part of Christ's genealogy, or descent, in David's time. It had been foretold to the Jews, that the *Messiah* should be of the tribe of *Judah*, and it was, *afterwards*, farther revealed, that he should be of the family of *David*: and, therefore, it was necessary,

for the full understanding of these prophecies, that the history of the family, in that tribe, should be written *before* these prophecies were revealed, to prevent the least suspicion of fraud or design. And, thus, this book, these prophecies, and their accomplishment, serve to illustrate each other. The adoption of Ruth, a heathen converted to the true God, into the line of Christ, has generally been considered as a pre-intimation of the admission of the Gentiles into the Church. A farther design of this book is to evidence the care of Divine Providence over those who sincerely fear God, in raising the pious Ruth, from a state of the deepest adversity, to that of the highest prosperity. The whole story is written with peculiar simplicity; and the meetings between Boaz and Ruth display the most unaffected piety, liberality, and modesty; and their reverent observance of the law of Moses, as well as of ancient customs, is painted in very lively and beautiful colours.

This book is publicly read by the modern Jews in their synagogues on the feast of weeks, or of Pentecost, on account of the *harvest* being mentioned in it, the first fruits of which were offered to God on that occasion.

This is all we must say upon the book of Ruth.

THE TWO BOOKS OF SAMUEL follow next. These two books, in the Jewish canon of Scripture, form but one, termed in Hebrew *The Book of Samuel*, probably because the greater part of the first book was written by that prophet, whose history and transactions it relates. The books of Samuel appear to have obtained their name from 1 Chron. xxix. 29, where the transactions of David's reign are said to be "written in the book of Samuel the Seer." In the Septuagint version they are called *The first and*

second Book of Kings, or of the Kingdoms; and, in our Bibles, to “the First” and “the Second Book of Samuel,” is added “otherwise called the first” and “The second book of the Kings,” as being two of the books in which the history of the kings of Israel and Judah is related. It is probable, that, of the first book of Samuel, the first twenty-four chapters were written by Samuel, and the remainder of the book, together with the whole of the second book, was committed to writing by the prophets Gad and Nathan, agreeably to the practice of the prophets, who wrote accounts of the transactions of their own times. That all these three persons were writers is plain, from 1 Chron. xxix. 29., where it is said, “Now the acts of David, first and last, behold they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and of Gad the seer:” the account of these prophets are here referred to as distinct books, but it would be natural for Ezra, by whom the canon of Jewish scripture was completed, to throw all their contents into the two books of Samuel.

The first book of Samuel contains the history of the Jewish Church and polity, from the birth of Samuel, during the time that Eli was judge, to the death of Saul the first king of Israel; a period of nearly eighty years, namely from the year of the world 2869, to 2949. The object of it is particularly to declare the religious and political state of the Israelites under their last judges, Eli and Samuel, and their first king, Saul, and the reason why their form of government was changed; thus affording a strong proof of the truth of the five books of Moses, in which we find, that this change had been foretold by Moses, to the assembled nation, a short time be-

fore his death, and upwards of four hundred years before there was a king. This book, also, shews the preservation of the Church of God amidst all the changes of the Israelitish government; together with signal instances of the divine mercy towards those who feared Jehovah, and of judgments inflicted upon his enemies. It consists of three parts, or sections; the first, to the end of the fourth chapter, contains an account of the transactions while Eli was judge; the second, beginning at the fifth, to the end of the 3d verse of the eighth chapter, the history of the Israelites while Samuel and his sons were judges; and the third, from the 4th verse of the eighth chapter, to the end, the history of Saul, and the transactions during his reign. The part of which I shall treat to-day is that to the end of the 3d verse of the eighth chapter.

The first chapter gives an account of the parents of Samuel and his birth. His father's name was Elkanah, and he was a Levite of Ramah, or Arimathea, of the most honourable house of the tribe of Levi. He had two wives. Hannah, his first wife, having no children, he took a second, whose name was Peninnah, a custom which was tolerated in those days, but which was, generally, as in this case, the cause of much domestic strife and trouble, for Peninnah reproached, or scoffed at, Hannah, on account of her barrenness. Elkanah, however, was a pious man, and "went up out of his city yearly," according to the law, "to worship, and to sacrifice unto the Lord of hosts in Shiloh," where the ark and the tabernacle were. "And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the Lord, were there:" though *they* were wicked, he did not neglect *his* duty because he did not like the priest; but came to

offer prayer and thanksgiving, and such sacrifices as were suitable to the occasion, which was, probably, the passover. The males only of every family were obliged to attend ; but devout men often took their wives and daughters with them. These had their portion, which was out of the peace-offerings, the greatest part whereof belonged to the offerer, wherewith he and his friends did feast together. (Deut. xii. 12., xvi. 11. Levit. vii. 15. ix. 22.) Hannah, however, was so distressed, on account of her being childless, and the scoffs of Peninnah, that “ she wept, and did not eat. Then said Elkanah her husband to her, Hannah, why weepest thou ? and why eatest thou not ? and why is thy heart grieved ? am not I better to thee than ten sons ? So Hannah rose up, after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk.” His kind words had comforted her, and brought her to her meat, and, what was better, her prayers. It is said, in the 9th verse, “ Now Eli the priest sat upon a seat by a post,” or pillar, “ of the temple,” or tabernacle, “ of the Lord,” to keep good order, give advice, explain the law, and bless the worshippers. And Hannah went to the tabernacle, and her heart filled when she found herself alone and before the Lord, “ And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore. And she vowed a vow, and said, O Lord of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but will give unto thine handmaid a man-child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life.”

It may be, here, observed, that Hannah makes *a vow*, in some respects similar to that of Jephthah, of which I spoke last Sunday, and in which certain *provisions, or conditions, are implied*, though not ex-

pressed; as, that the child, if a son, had no defect of body, or of mind, in which case he could not be separated to the service of the Lord, and that her husband gave his consent, and the son himself, also, when he came to years of discretion. The Levites were to serve only twenty-five years, and, then, become judges, or preachers of righteousness; but he was to serve all the days of his life, and be a Nazarite from the womb.

As Eli saw Hannah at her devotions, her lips moving, and hearing no words, he, too hastily, concluded that “she had been drunken;” but Hannah remonstrating mildly, he was convinced of his mistake, and dismissed her with his prayers and blessings, verse 17, “Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him.”

In due time, the child was born, and was called *Samuel*, or *asked of God*; and, when he was weaned, he was taken and presented to the Lord, and left, probably, in the care of one of the matrons, the wife of a Levite, who resided near the tabernacle; and Hannah returned thanks in that beautiful thanksgiving Ode, or Song, which occurs in the II^d chapter, from the 1st, to the end of the 10th verse, the chapter appointed as the first lesson at this morning’s service.

In the 10th verse, she says, “the Lord shall judge the ends of the earth, and he shall give strength unto his King, and exalt the horn of his ANOINTED.” This is the first place in Scripture where the word MESSIAH, or ANOINTED, occurs; and, as there was no *king* in Israel now, it seems the best interpretation to refer it to CHRIST, especially as there is so remarkable a resemblance between the Song of Hannah and that of the blessed Virgin, Luke i. 46, &c.: as

if she had said, "God shall make the MESSIAH great and honourable, and cause him to triumph over all his enemies*."

The remainder of this chapter treats principally of Eli and his sons, Hophni and Phinehas. Though Eli was himself, in many respects, or upon the whole, a good man, yet he was not happy in the education of his sons. To educate, or bring up, children properly requires an extraordinary mixture of gentleness and firmness; of gentleness free from hurtful indulgence, and of firmness which never yields to what is wrong; and which corrects from principle, without partiality and without passion. Eli erred on the side of indulgence; or, from fear, or sloth, failed to lay upon them the restraints, or to give them the correction, which they so grievously needed. When he was told of their abominations, "he," merely "said unto them, Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil dealings by all this people. Nay, my sons: for it is no good report that I hear; ye make the Lord's people to transgress. If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but, if a man sin against the Lord, who shall intreat for him? Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto the voice of their father."

Eli, according to the commandment of God by Moses, given Deut. xxi. 18—21, should have proceeded to extremities with them, "If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them, then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the

* Orton, Vol. III. p. 9.

elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; and they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard. And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you: and all Israel shall hear and fear.”

I will remark that it is said, 1 Sam. ii. verse 25, “they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, *because* the Lord would slay them,” which makes their continuance in sin the *effect* of God’s determination to destroy them; and, thus, our translation apparently supports the horrid doctrine, that God *wills*, or *decrees*, his creatures to commit crimes, because he is determined to display his justice in their destruction. But the word translated *because* should have been translated *therefore*, which makes their wilful and impenitent disobedience the cause of their destruction*.

At the 27th verse, we are told of “a man of God,” or a prophet, coming to Eli, and telling him of God’s intended judgments against him and his sons.

The high-priesthood, (on some account, or another, not mentioned in scripture,) had been taken from the family of *Eleazar*, the elder of Aaron’s two sons, after Nadab and Abihu had been destroyed, and had been given to the family of Ithamar, the younger, from whom Eli was descended; and, now, it is to be taken from him again, and given back to the elder branch. His two sons are to be cut off in one day, and his family are to come to want. At the end of the 30th verse, are these remarkable words, important to all, in all ages, “them that honour me

* Horne’s Introduction, Vol. II. p. 533.

I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." Let those who dishonour God, by setting up idols in their hearts, by prophaning and blaspheming his holy name, by prophaning his sabbaths, and despising his worship, his word and his sacraments, and breaking his commandments, think on this. For all this—or any one particular of this—God will dishonour and punish them.

In the III^d chapter, the first lesson at this evening's service, we have an account how God, in an extraordinary manner, revealed himself to Samuel, and informed him what he intended to do against Eli, and which Eli drew from him again, and on hearing which he said, verse 18, "It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good." Such is the spirit in which we ought to receive all the dispensations of God, however grievous.

At the end of the chapter, we learn, that "Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord."

In the IVth chapter the threatenings of God begin to be fulfilled in an awful manner. "Israel went out against the Philistines to battle," and the Philistines slew of them "about four thousand men." When, without consulting God, the Elders, (recollecting, probably, what had been done at Jericho,) sent for the ark; and Hophni and Phinehas either took it without asking Eli, or, else, he was weak enough to give consent to its being taken. A battle ensued, thirty thousand of the Israelites were slain, the ark was taken, and Hophni and Phinehas were killed, cut off in the multitude of their sins. Eli, at the age of ninety-eight, and after having judged Israel forty years, on hearing this dreadful news, fell back, and broke his neck, and died.

In the Vth chapter, we are told, that the Philis-

tines placed the ark in the house, or temple, of Dagon, at Ashdod. We have heard, before, of a temple to Dagon at Gaza, which Samson pulled down upon the heads of his worshippers, and buried them in the ruins. Dagon was an idol, represented with the head and body of a man, and the lower part like a fish. He was the *Neptune*, or god of the sea, of the ancients.

In my Discourse on the fourth Sunday after Easter, I entered, at some length, upon the consideration of “the usurpers of the Deity of Jehovah,” and shewed in how many instances, even in our Christian country, the *heathen gods* occupy the place of the ONE TRUE GOD. Neptune, or Dagon, is one of these. As a maritime country, and distinguished for our commerce and signal successes at sea, Neptune too often occupies in poetry, in painting and in sculpture, a place which certainly belongs to the true God, were it allowable, or possible, to make a representation of him. You have, I doubt not, many of you, heard songs in which *Neptune* is represented as the ruler of the sea, and the giver of victory*. Even in the cathedral of our metropolis, in a monument to a great naval officer, *Neptune* is represented as receiving the dying hero into his arms†. The dying *Christian* exclaims, “LORD JESUS, receive my spirit.” (Acts vii. 59.) The spirit of Lazarus was carried by *Angels* into Abraham’s bosom. (Luke xvi. 22.)

* Some of these may be seen even in the *Elegant Extracts*, compiled by Dr. Knox, of neither an elegant nor Christian Character.

† See also Plumptre’s Collection of Songs, in 3 Vols., Vol. I. Preface, p. xxxiii. There are some excellent remarks on a figure of Hercules introduced in a monument in Westminster Abbey, in Hervey’s Theron and Aspasio, Dialogue xvi. Works, Vol. III. p. 402, Note.

Dagon, or Neptune, could not stand before the ark of God, the image fell down before it; and, when again set up, again fell, and the head and hands were broken. The men of Ashdod were plagued by detaining the ark, and they sent it off to Ekron. The men of Ekron were plagued, likewise, and,

In the VIth chapter, we read how they returned it to Israel, to Beth-shemesh. But the men of Beth-shemesh were curious and presumptuous, and looked into it, probably, to see whether the tables with the commandments were still there, or to look at them. But even the high priest was to see the ark but once in the year; and, then, through a cloud of incense.

It is said, verse 19, the Lord “smote of the people fifty thousand and three score and ten men.” This seems to be a great number, especially as Beth-shemesh was only a village, and many were left to lament it. An excellent commentator proposes to translate it “he slew fifty out of a thousand;” being *fourteen hundred* in all who indulged this curiosity, God was so merciful as to slay only a twentieth part, or seventy out of fourteen hundred. It was an ancient custom, when great numbers were capitally convicted, to, what was called *decimate* them, or take every *tenth* person; but God here took only every twentieth. An Hebrew manuscript, we are told, reads, instead of fifteen thousand and seventy, only *seventy*, and this number is confirmed by the authority of *Josephus**.

The men of Beth-shemesh being thus punished, sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim to request them to come and take the ark. And

* See Orton, Vol. III. p. 32.

In the VIIth chapter we have an account of the settlement and continuance of the ark at Kirjath-jearim, in the house of Abinadab, the reformation of the people, and their deliverance from the Philistines; of Samuel's judging Israel, and going his circuit once a year to administer justice; and his building an altar to the Lord.

But in the VIIIth chapter the scene is again reversed, and, instead of judgment and religion, we are told, that Samuel, being old, and unable to undergo the fatigue, he made his sons Joel and Abiah judges, and they "walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment."

This part of sacred history presents an awful lesson to both parents and children, and is enough to make both the ears of every careless or too-indulgent parent, and of every wicked and undutiful child that hears it, to tingle.

Depend upon it, parents, that,—to use an English proverb,—“As the *withe* is bent, the tree will grow;” in the language of scripture, “Train up a child in the way he should go, and, when he is old, he will not depart from it.” (Prov. xxii. 6.) The *first* trouble is the *least*, the first denial will save you many more, and much more painful ones. God gives you children to train for *Him*; and the more you train them in *His ways*, the more it will be for their happiness, here and hereafter, and for your own too. But every sin unchecked, every fault of temper unrestrained, every folly unreprieved, will “take root downwards, and bear fruit upwards,” (2 Kings xix. 30.) and shed its seeds, the nuisance and plague of you, and them, and all around them.

I will say a few words, likewise, to children and

young persons, [and especially to those who have offered themselves for the approaching *Confirmation*.

It is not a little remarkable, how difficult it is to get parents to bring their children to be baptized, and they say, that they cannot get friends to come forward to stand as godfathers and godmothers, because the *promises* they make for the children are so strict, so awful, that they cannot fulfil them. Now *Confirmation* is the young person's *confirming*, or taking upon himself, the *promises* made by his godfathers and godmothers, in his name, at his baptism; and, therefore, it requires just the same spirit for *confirmation* as for *baptism*, the promises are as strict, as awful: and, yet, I see children, mere boys and girls, who cannot read, who cannot say their catechism, who do not know the first and most simple truths of the Christian faith, coming forward to be confirmed, and their parents and godfathers and godmothers consenting to it, and unconcerned about it. From whence does this arise? From ignorance, and an indifference to what is right and good, to God and religion, in both the children and the parents. Children who know nothing about religion can only do it for the sake of an idle holiday, the ride to the market town, a good dinner at the expense of the Parish, and riot and disorder. But is not this to "kick at God's sacrifice?" (1 Sam. ii. 29.)

How different is the case of Elkanah and Hannah and Samuel.]

The child Samuel was asked of God by a pious mother, when the family were worshipping God, at one of the great festivals, and was dedicated to God before he was born. As soon as he could be sepa-

rated from his mother, he was given up to the Lord. At the 28th verse of the first chapter, it is said, “And he worshipped the Lord there.” Which, whether it refers to Elkanah, or to Samuel, or to both, shews the pious mind of the parents, probably, at this dedication of the child to God : Samuel, even at three years of age, had been taught to know the ONE TRUE GOD OF HEAVEN AND EARTH, and, kneeling by the side of his father, worshipped the Lord. How delightfully the history continues, chapter ii. verse 11., “the child did minister unto the Lord before Eli the priest :” verse 18. “But Samuel ministered before the Lord, being girded with a linen ephod.”—v. 26. “And the child Samuel grew on, and was in favour both with the Lord, and also with men.” And, in the third chapter, we find God revealing himself to Samuel in an especial manner ; and, at the 19th verse, it is said, “And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground.”

My children, neither I, nor you, have any reason to expect “the word of the Lord” to come to us, now, in a voice that can be heard. But “the word of the Lord” does come to you in a very plain, and solemn, and awful manner by his BIBLE and by his *ministers*, and calls upon you to consider seriously what is your state here. Attend to it, and say, as Eli instructed Samuel to say, “Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.” (1 Sam. iii. 9.) God has sent you here into this world, as into a place of trial, or training for heaven : and, according to what you believe and do here, you will be happy, or miserable; you will go to heaven, or to hell, forever and ever. How long God will continue you here, you do not know ; you see children dying at all ages, some infants, some

when they begin to speak and think, some when they have attained some strength and knowledge, some more advanced; but *this* belongs to *all* and *each one*, that, *as* has been his faith and his practice, when God calls him away, *so* must be his lot to all eternity, “Where the tree falls, there it must lie.” If you have been good children, if you have honoured your parents, loved your brethren and your school-fellows, been diligent, and industrious, and honest, constant and attentive at school and at church, constant in private prayer, and looked unto the blessed Jesus as your Saviour and your pattern, then, be assured, you will go to heaven, die when you will, and be happy for ever and ever. But, if you are idle, slothful, neglectful of God’s word and his worship, take his name in vain, and make use of wicked words, are disobedient to your parents, quarrelsome with your school-fellows, thieving, and neglecting of your parent’s, or master’s work, then, depend upon it—and remember this my solemn warning,—you will be turned, with the wicked and all that forget God, into *hell*, into everlasting torments, into everlasting fire.—“O who can live with everlasting burnings?” (See Isaiah xxxiii. 14.)

Children and young persons, think on this.

Parents, think on this.

SERMON XXVII.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.—1 SAMUEL VIII. VERSE 4.—
XXXI.

THE ISRAELITES REJECT SAMUEL—THE REIGN OF SAUL: SAUL
CONSULTS SAMUEL—ANOINTED KING—SAUL'S SACRIFICE—
HIS RASH CURSE—AGAG—DAVID'S HARP—HIS FORBEARANCE
—THE DEATH OF SAMUEL—THE WITCH OF ENDOR—THE
DEATH OF SAUL.

1 SAMUEL XII. 14, 15.

If ye will fear the Lord, and serve him, and obey his voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then shall both ye, and also the king that reigneth over you, continue following the Lord your God. But, if ye will not obey the voice of the Lord, but rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then shall the hand of the Lord be against you, as it was against your fathers.

IN my last discourse I considered the first book of Samuel, as far as the end of the 3d verse of the VIIIth chapter, from which we learned, that Samuel, being old and unable to continue his circuits as a judge, appointed his two sons his deputies, but they “turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment.”

In consequence of this, we are told, at the 4th verse, “all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, and said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us

like all the nations." Now, this was a very foolish conclusion ; for, though Samuel was old, he was as fit to counsel and govern as ever ; and, had he known his sons did ill, he would, no doubt, have chosen others in their place. But the chief reason was *pride* ; a poor prophet in a mantle, was too mean for them ; they wanted more pomp and magnificence, officers, and a guard, and to make a figure among *the nations*.

" But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us," as it was ungrateful to him, after all the deliverances they had received through his means. " And Samuel prayed unto the Lord" for direction what to do in this case. " And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee : for they have not rejected *thee*, but they have rejected *ME*, that *I* should not reign over them." Samuel was displeased, but God told him that *He* had more reason to be so, for they had in fact rejected *Him* as their king, he had acted as such in times past, making their laws, choosing their governors, directing in all difficult cases, making war and peace ; and, thus, ordering all those things, which, in other states, were left to their king. Thus it appears, that their government was what is called a *Theocracy*, that is, that the chief power, or strength, was in *God*. God proceeds, " According to all the works which they have done, since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt, even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me ; and served other gods, so do they, also, unto thee," it is their old way ; they have chosen other gods to worship, no wonder they now want another ruler. " Now, therefore, hearken unto their voice," let them have their own way, and a king

like the nations about them. God grants them their request in judgment, as he had done to their fathers before, when they murmured for flesh in the wilderness, and as he did to Balaam, in permitting him to undertake his journey to Balak king of Moab. It appears from the law of Moses, that God *intended* to give them *a king*; and, had they waited God's time they would have had a *good* one; but, now, he left them to their own hearts' lusts, and they suffered sufficiently for it. As he says, afterwards, Hosea xiii. 11., "I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath." God continues his directions to Samuel, "howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and shew them the manner of the king that shall reign over them," what difficulties and slavery they may be brought into; that they may be without excuse, and have no one to blame but themselves. They had not sense enough to ask for a *wise* and *good* king, but one *like the nations* about them, who were all arbitrary princes; and such a one they should have.

Is not this a principle which works in the human heart at this day? To be *like the people about us*, or *the world*, or in what is called *the fashion*, is the great object, be the consequences what they may. For *this* people give up the real comforts and happiness which God has assigned them, to seek after vain empty shew and misery. For this our clothes are to be made for other people to look at, rather than for our own warmth and decency and comfort; the same with our houses; the same in our eating, and in our habits of life. In short, the *world*, or *fashion*, is our *god* whom we *worship*, and to which we give up every thing which belongs to the Creator of heaven and earth, to the Redeemer from damnation, and

to the bountiful giver of all we enjoy here, and all we are promised and hope for hereafter.

Samuel represented to the Israelites how many grievances they would suffer in having a king, and it is said, verse 19., "Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us; that we, also, may be like all the nations."

In the IXth chapter we enter upon the history of Saul, and have an account of his family; and of his father losing his asses, and Saul and a servant going in search of them. This, to many among us, who see the *ass* a poor despised, persecuted animal, may seem but a very low and trifling account; but asses, in that country, were of a finer breed, and horses not being allowed to the Israelites, asses were in more estimation, and a great part of the wealth of many consisted in having a number of them.

Some, also, have thought it a sign of a wicked mind in Saul to consult a prophet on such a trifling business; but this was not so. The prophets were, indeed, set apart for more important concerns, but there are several instances of their endeavouring to give advice in common matters; and one reason for allowing this seems to have been, that God was willing to keep his people from consulting wizards and idols, the gods of the heathen; and, farther, by seeing the prophet's words come true in lesser instances, they would be engaged to believe him in greater and more important ones. Saul's taking a present to Samuel has been ridiculed, as if the prophet was no better than a *conjuror*, or *fortune-teller*, who would not act without a *fee*. But this arises from ignorance; for it was, then, and still is, customary, in the east, never to approach the prince, or priest,

or any person of eminence, without some offering *. (see x. 27.)

In the Xth chapter Samuel anoints Saul, and instructs him, and gives him three signs, by which he might be assured that he was commissioned by God, and which, accordingly, came to pass. And it is said, verse 9, “God gave him another heart,” the best gift he could bestow upon him, if he had been careful to preserve it. Samuel assembled all the people at Mizpeh, and Saul was appointed king by lot. It is said, verse 23, “when he stood among the people, he was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upward. And Samuel said to all the people, See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people? And all the people shouted, and said, *God save the king!*” They wanted a king to look at, and God gives them one accordingly. “And Saul went home to Gibeah; and there went with him a band of men, whose hearts God had touched. But the children of Belial said, How shall this man save us? And they despised him, and brought him no presents: but he held his peace.”

In the XIth chapter we are informed of the extremity to which the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead were reduced; of their deliverance by Saul, and his being confirmed in the government with the consent of the people, and his clemency towards those who would not own him for king.

In the XIIth chapter, which is the first lesson at this morning's service, Samuel resigns the government, and attempts to make the people penitent and religious; he appeals to them concerning the equity

* Orton, Vol. III. p. 45, 46.

of his administration and sets before them their ingratitude. The following exhortation, verses 14, 15, which I have chosen for my text, is applicable to all nations and all communities, and shews how much the goodness of the governors depends upon the goodness of the people: "If ye will fear the Lord, and serve him, and obey his voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then shall both ye, and, also, the king that reigneth over you, continue following the Lord your God. But, if ye will *not* obey the voice of the Lord, but rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then shall the hand of the Lord be against you, as it was against your fathers." What Samuel says of *himself* at the 23d verse, should be constantly in the heart of every governor and minister, "as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way. Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you."

In the XIIIth chapter we have an account of the beginning of a war between the Israelites and Philistines, in which we, for the first time, hear of Jonathan, the son of Saul, whose character is very amiable, both as a warrior and a friend. We read, too, of Saul's trespass in offering sacrifice without Samuel, which shewed his disobedience to the commands of God, and his distrust of God's keeping the people over whom he had placed him in obedience to him; though he pretended that it was out of a motive of religion and a zeal for God. But "Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God, which he commanded thee: for, now, would the Lord have

established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. But, now, thy kingdom shall not continue : the Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee."

In the XIVth chapter an account is given of the success of Jonathan against the garrison of the Philistines, and the successful attack of Saul upon the body of the Philistine army, and his rash adjuration, or curse : Saul, verse 24, when his army were pursuing the Philistines, " adjureth the people, saying, Cursed be the man that eateth any food until evening, that I may be avenged on mine enemies." The curse alighted upon his own son, who, unknowingly, eat of some honey in the wood. Saul would have put him to death, to keep his vow, had not the people interfered. Such is the folly and the impiety of unconsidered vows and curses.

In the XVth chapter we have the account of Saul's expedition against the Amalekites, in which he is ordered to destroy every thing, both men and cattle and goods. Saul, however, spares the king, Agag, either from a false pity, or, perhaps, in hopes of obtaining a large ransom for him ; and the best of the cattle and goods, under pretence of offering them in sacrifice to God ; but " Samuel said, (verse 22.) Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord ? Behold, to *obey* is better than sacrifice, and to *hearken* than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath, also, rejected thee from being king." " Saul," indeed, " said unto Samuel, I have

sinned." But it was in a very different spirit to that in which these words were, afterwards, uttered by David, (2 Sam. xii. 13.) and in which Ahab rent his clothes and fasted, when he was reproved by Elijah for his sins. (1 Kings xxi. 27—29.) Saul felt no abhorrence for his sin, nor grief that he had disobeyed and affronted God: he only felt hurt, that he had forfeited his kingdom, and that he should lose the respect of his people. Samuel, therefore, proceeds to execute that sentence which should have been executed by Saul; he says to Agag, "As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women. And Samuel hewed," or ordered "Agag" to be hewed "in pieces," by the soldiers, "before the Lord in Gilgal."

In the XVIth chapter we enter upon the history of David, but it will make our subject, I think, the more clear, if we consider to-day those parts of the remainder of this first book of Samuel which treat of the character of *Saul*; and, on Sunday next, those which illustrate the character of *David* before his ascending the throne of Israel.

We have, before, heard, (x. 9,) that God, on Saul's becoming king, gave him a new heart; but, now, for his misconduct, (verse 14.) "the Spirit of the Lord departed from" him, and "an evil spirit" "troubled him." It is said, that the evil spirit was "from the Lord," that was by his *permission*, the *consequence* of the departure of the Holy Spirit, not that God sent it. How careful ought we to be, that we "grieve not the Holy Spirit," and drive him to forsake us. Saul's servants recommended *music* amidst this trouble of the evil spirit, or insanity; and David was introduced to him, to play upon his harp before him, and to which, no doubt, he added "psalms and

hymns and spiritual songs.” Music, properly used, is known to have a natural tendency to assuage the passions and compose the mind. It was celebrated for this among the ancients; and it is observed that those who love music, are generally good-tempered calm and gentle*. I wish I could see it more generally cultivated in this parish than it is.

I shall no farther notice the encounter of David with the giant Goliath, in the XVIIth chapter, than as it gave rise to the envy of Saul, which is mentioned in the XVIIIth, and which led to an attempt made by Saul upon the life of David, as he was playing on his harp before him, when Saul threw his javelin at him, but David, by the good providence of God, avoided it.

Saul had promised, that he who killed the giant should have his eldest daughter to wife; but, when the time came that David should have had her, Saul gave her to another; and gave him his younger daughter Michal, but with a view to her being a snare to him. David was obliged to fly from Saul; and, because Ahimelech, the priest, at Nob, gave him assistance, Saul caused the priests and the inhabitants to be slain with the sword, as related in the XXIIId chapter.

In the XXIVth chapter, we have an account of David and his companions seeking safety in a cave, in the wilderness of En-gedi, to which Saul came, likewise, not knowing that he was there, and laid himself down to sleep, while they were retreated to the sides of the cave. Here was Saul completely in the power of David, who was anointed to be his successor, and his companions urged him to slay

* Orton, Vol. III. p. 89.

him. But David did not think that Saul's being his enemy, and in his power, were sufficient reasons for taking his life. He did not—as I stated in my discourse on the second Sunday after Trinity, in speaking of Jael and Sisera,—think that the act of Jael was any example for him: he knew that, if she had a warrant from God, he had not. David's generous heart, therefore, disdained what would have been treachery in *him*, and he merely cut off the skirt of his garment, to shew him, that he had had him in his power; and, when Saul went out, David went out after him, shewed him the skirt, and assured Saul he had no evil intentions towards him, so that Saul was affected, and “lift up his voice and wept.” (verse 16.)

In the XXVth chapter, the 1st verse, we are told that “Samuel died.” He was nearly an hundred years old, and so greatly beloved, that “all Israel gathered together, and lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah.” They, now, saw their folly in desiring a king, and rejecting the virtue and goodness which had been so conspicuous in him.

In the XXVIth chapter Saul repeats his pursuit of David, and David, at night, enters Saul's camp, while he and his guards and soldiers are asleep, and enters his tent; when he had, again, an opportunity of slaying him, had he been so disposed. He, however, only takes his spear and a cruse of water from his bed's head, and went away, and awakened the army and Saul. This second proof of forbearance and forgiveness so wrought upon Saul, that he “said to David, Blessed be thou, my son David; thou shalt both do great things, and thou shalt still prevail.”

In the XXVIIIth chapter we have a very remarkable account of Saul consulting with one who pre-

tended to witchcraft, or to have a power of raising the dead, and, by their means, foretelling future events. The Philistines gathered their armies together in great force, and Saul, viewing them, probably, from some hill, “was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled.” It is said, 1 Chron. x. 14, “he inquired not of the Lord.” That is he did not inquire of him in due time, nor with a right mind. For it is said, here, verse 6, “when Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.” Saul had, in the early part of his reign, probably at the instigation of Samuel, and agreeably to the law of Moses, (Exod. xxii. 18. Deut. xviii. 10, 11.) “put away those that had,” or pretended that they had, “familiar spirits, and the wizards.” But, now that God refuses him any revelation, instead of returning to God, and humbling himself, he disguises himself, and applies to a woman who pretends to witchcraft. The woman reminds him of what Saul had done, and says, (verse 9.) “wherefore, then, layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die?” What a reproof was this to Saul, to convince him of his sin, and how should we bear these words in mind, when tempted to commit any sin, “Wherefore layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die?” Saul, as wicked people often do, sware by the Lord against whom he was acting in rebellion, “As the Lord liveth, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing.” The woman pretended to have a power over the dead, and to be able to bring them before her, and said, “Whom shall I bring up unto thee?” And Saul said “Bring me up Samuel.” Our translation says, “And *when* the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice.” But the word *when* is not in the ori-

ginal. The instant Saul pronounced Samuel's name, she saw him in her cell. Seeing the venerable prophet himself, she immediately concluded, that he would not appear in this extraordinary manner to any one but the king of Israel, and, therefore, it must be Saul, "And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: for what sawest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw *gods* ascending out of the earth." The word, here translated *gods*, often signifies *a god*, and, so, is applied to the true God, to a magistrate, or personages of great honour. And Saul "said unto her, What form is he of?" In the *Oracles*, or places of consultation of the heathen gods, the walls and furniture of the apartments were so constructed, that the answers were often given from behind walls, or screens, and the person giving it was not seen at all, or only partially*. So, here, probably, this woman's apartment was constructed in some such manner, and Samuel might, at first, be seen only by her, and then advance to the view of Saul. "And she said, An old man cometh up; and he is covered with *a mantle*," such as prophets wear; and perhaps it was the very mantle, or appearance of the mantle, which Saul himself had *torn*, (xv. 27.) the emblem of the rending of the kingdom out of his hand.

"And Saul perceived that it was Samuel." The original says Samuel *himself*, a very important word. Saul perceived that it was really the very same person whom he had so often seen and conversed with. "And he stooped with his face to the ground, and

* See Dr. Clarke's account of the Oracular Cave, at Telmessus, in the gulph of Glaucus, in his Travels, Vol. II. 4to., p. 239; and of another at Argos, in Peloponnesus, Vol. III. p. 677. See, also, Horne's Introduction, Vol. III. p. 389.

bowed himself. And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me to bring me up ?” That is, Why hast thou provoked my spirit ? He was grieved to be called on such an errand, to be a witness and reprover of Saul’s impiety and madness. “ And Saul answered, I am sore distressed ; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams : therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do. Then said Samuel, Wherefore, then, dost thou ask of me, seeing the Lord is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy.” Nothing can be more senseless than to imagine that I can do any thing for thee, when God, whose servant I am, hath forsaken thee. Samuel proceeds, “ And the Lord hath done to *him*,” our translation reads ;—but a learned critic hath shewn it should be to *thee*, “ as he spake to me : for the Lord hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbour, even to David. Because thou obeyedst not the voice of the Lord, nor executedst his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the Lord done this thing unto thee this day. Moreover the Lord will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines : and to-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me.” That is, the sons who are with you in the battle, for Armoni and Mephibosheth lived long after, and were slain by the Gibeonites, and Ishbosheth lived several years. And “ with me,” does not mean in a state of blessedness ; but merely in the state of the dead, as if he had said, “ Thou and thy sons shall *die*.”

This story is, certainly, attended with difficulties. Commentators have often strangely confounded both it and themselves. There are *three* opinions

concerning it. One is that *it was all a juggler*; another that *an evil spirit personated Samuel*; and the third, which seems the most probable, that *it was really Samuel himself*. The first opinion, that it was *a juggler*, is absurd in itself, as Saul was not likely to be the dupe of the woman to this extent. He and his companions were brave men, and not to be easily imposed upon; they were not frightened, though she was; their conduct was quite rational. Had it been a juggler, the woman would not have been frightened. When she knew Saul, she would have flattered him, and given him some favourable answer, as the lying prophets were accustomed to do; she would not have foretold his death, lest she should suffer for it, and it should be imputed to her enchantments, and no juggler could have foretold events so precisely. Neither could *an evil spirit* have done it; we have no reason to believe that God would reveal these things to them. Nor would an evil spirit have reproved Saul, as this apparition did, nor blame him for inquiring in this way; but would rather have encouraged and countenanced it: Satan is not divided against himself.

If it be asked, Why God answered him *thus*, when he refused to do it in another way? It may be answered that there was no prophet with Saul. The Urim was with Abiathar, with David (xxii. 20.); and he could not expect dreams or visions. God might wisely suffer Samuel to appear, to make the greater impression on Saul, who had paid so little regard to him while living; and to reprove him for his former crimes, especially this last. And how could God have taken a more effectual method to discountenance such a practice? Had there been no answer, or had Saul only been frightened by this

wicked woman, their faith in this wretched creature and her art might have been confirmed. But, when he caused Samuel to appear in his own person, and declare, what none but infinite wisdom could reveal, it was a remarkable way of shewing his detestation of such practices, and a strong proof of the immortality of the soul. If it be farther asked, Why did not Samuel exhort him to *repent*? I answer, the reproof itself is an exhortation; but, probably, there was no room for repentance, after all that had been said to him, and done for him *.

That this story is no sanction to the general belief in apparitions, as it commonly prevails in this day, I have shewn in my discourse entitled “The Truth of the Popular Notion of Apparitions or Ghosts, considered by the Light of Scripture,” which I have repeatedly preached in this church, and which is printed.

In the XXXIst chapter we have an account of the death of Saul and of three of his sons, and the victory gained by the Philistines over the Israelites. Saul, who took no concern for his precious *soul*, was fearful lest his poor perishing body should fall into the hands of the Philistines, and became the murderer of himself, running upon his own sword. Such was the end of one who was raised from a humble station to the highest, to be king of God’s chosen people; and yet, so far was this from contributing to his happiness, that it ended in his misery and downfall. Such is the end of greatness without the fear of God. “What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul, or *what* shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matt.

* Orton, Vol. III. p. 150—154.

xvi. 26.) Who would wish for place or power, when they bring so much danger along with them! Happy they who are placed in the middle station of life, below the temptations which attend the great, and above those which await the poor. Not that any station is without its temptations and its trials; but the middle has, probably, the fewest. And, when it pleases God to call *us* to higher stations, we should accept them as awful charges for the public good; and our daily, and almost hourly, prayer to God should be, “Teach me thy way, O Lord, and I will walk in thy truth: O knit my heart unto thee, that I may fear thy name. I will thank thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart; and will praise thy name for evermore.” (Psalm lxxxvi. 11, 12.) Take not thy Holy Spirit from me, but “lead me in the way everlasting,” (Psalm cxxxix. 24.) for thy dear Son’s sake, Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

SERMON XXVIII.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.—1 SAMUEL XVI.—2 SAMUEL I.

THE CHARACTER OF DAVID BEFORE HE WAS KING: THE ANOINTING OF DAVID—DAVID AND GOLIATH—DAVID AND JONATHAN—SAUL SEEKS DAVID'S RUIN—DAVID AND ACHISH—HIS MARRIAGES—HIS FORBEARANCE TOWARDS SAUL—DAVID, NABAL AND ABIGAIL—DAVID'S SECOND FORBEARANCE TOWARDS SAUL—THE DEATH OF SAUL AND HIS SONS—THE LAMENTATION OF DAVID—HIS FORGIVING SPIRIT.

1 SAMUEL xxvii. 45.

Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: But I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.

IN my discourse on Sunday last, in passing through the latter part of the first book of Samuel, when we came to the XVIth chapter, I observed, that we, then, entered upon the history of David, but that I thought it would render the subject more clear to consider *then* those parts of the book which treat of the character of *Saul*, so as to see the whole of it at once, and to reserve to this day those which illustrate the character of *David* before he ascended the throne of Israel: this I purpose to do now, which will take us to the end of the Ist chapter of the IId book; and, on Sunday next, I purpose to consider the character of David after he was king.

No sooner had God rejected Saul, than he ordered Samuel to go to Bethlehem, to anoint one of the sons of Jesse to be king. Samuel acquainted Jesse with his errand; and his sons were called in, one by one, to appear before Samuel. When Eliab, the eldest, came in, Samuel said, "Surely the Lord's anointed is before him. But the Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him; for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the *heart*." Saul had been selected on the principle of the "nations," on account of his stature, being taller by the head and shoulders than the generality of people; but it had too evidently appeared, that something *more* was wanting to make a good king, a *heart* right with God. Seven of Jesse's sons passed before Samuel in this way; but it seemed that none of these was the one upon whom God had fixed. "And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither. And he sent, and brought him in."

We must not exactly form our ideas of a shepherd among the Israelites from those shepherds whom we see among ourselves. The business was often followed by persons of some consequence and education. Jesse was the grandson of Boaz, whom we know to have been a person of considerable property. The life of a shepherd was not so peaceable among them, as it is among us. The country was infested by robbers and wild beasts, so that they often had to fight in defence of themselves and their flocks,

One of the pastimes of shepherds was to play upon some instrument of music, both for their own amusement, and because sheep are said to be particularly fond of it, and to feed the better whilst they hear it. David, it seems, was particularly skilful on the harp ; and, being of a pious disposition, he tuned it to the praise of the Lord. The XXIII^d psalm, (especially in Addison's version) read with these ideas, will have peculiar beauty and force.

David, it is supposed, might be about twenty-two years of age at this time, and Jesse brought him in to Samuel. It is said, verse 12., "Now he was ruddy," or red-haired, which was thought a great beauty among them, "and withal of a beautiful countenance," or of fine eyes, "and goodly to look to," something very amiable and sweet in his countenance ; and these natural charms were, probably, heightened, by a modest blush, when he appeared before Samuel. "And the Lord said, Arise, anoint him ; for this is he." This choice was evidently the immediate act of God, for Samuel and Jesse had both judged wrong. "Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him," our translation says "*in* the midst of his brethren," but it should, rather, be "*from* the midst of his brethren," that is in private ; because he was desirous to keep it a secret, lest his elder brethren should envy him : "and the spirit of the Lord came upon him from that day forward."

The remainder of the chapter, from the 14th verse, gives an account of the insanity of Saul, and of David's being sent for to soothe him with music, of which I spoke in my last. The character given of David to Saul, by one of his servants, is, that he "is cunning," or well-skilled, "in playing, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in

matters, and a comely person, and the Lord is with him." David's music and conduct had such an effect upon Saul, that he was restored to a right mind, and he loved David, and made him his armour-bearer. But, the chief purpose for which he was sent for from his father's house being fulfilled, he returned to his usual occupation of keeping the sheep.

The Israelites had desired to have a king like the nations around them, to fight their battles; and God had given them one "taller by the head and shoulders than all the people." But, instead of fulfilling the end for which he was set over them, he disobeyed God, and was declared to have forfeited his kingdom. This, probably, emboldened the Philistines to invade the country, and they and the Israelites, as we read in the XVIIth chapter, encamped over against each other, with the valley of Elah between them. The Philistines proposed, that the matter should be decided by *single combat*, that is, that each side should choose a man, and that they should fight; and whichever champion got the better, his army should be considered as gaining the victory. They chose, probably, in contempt of Saul's great stature, a giant of the name of Goliath, "whose height was six cubits and a span," which some compute to be about ten feet, and others eleven feet and more, nearly twice as tall as men of common stature. His bulk and strength were in proportion, for the weight of his armour was at least upwards of two hundred and fifty pounds of our weight, and it would require the strength of *six* good lusty men to bear such a load of armour from morning till night, as if it had been but an ordinary dress, and to march and fight in it with that agility of body which is necessary in battle.

This champion, for forty days successively, presented himself before the army of Israel, defying them and their God: but, neither Saul, nor the brave Jonathan his son, dare venture to fight with him, though Saul offered to give any one who should overcome him, his eldest daughter in marriage, and to make his father's house free in Israel. It was in this state of affairs, on the fortieth, or forty-first day, when both armies were drawn out to battle, and the giant was between them defying and cursing, that David arrived at the camp with a supply of provisions, sent by his father to his three eldest brethren who fought under Saul. David heard the insolence of the Philistine champion, when his heart yearned with indignation, and he said "What shall be done to the man that killed this Philistine and taketh away the reproach from Israel? for who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?" Eliab, his eldest brother, moved, probably, by envy, at seeing a spirit in him, which was not in himself, rebuked him for his forwardness, to which he returned only a mild reply. Saul, however, hearing of his readiness to engage with Goliath, sent for him, and endeavoured to dissuade him from so unequal a combat; but David replied, that he trusted the Lord, who had enabled him to slay a lion and a bear, without any weapons, would give him the victory over this proud blasphemer. Pleased with this answer, Saul gave him his own armour, of the same kind as that which Goliath wore; but David, finding it heavy and burthensome, put it off, and met the giant with only his staff and sling and five smooth stones.

The sling was an ancient instrument of warfare, consisting of a long doubled strap, or loop, of leather,

or of leather and cords, in which a stone was placed, and, by whirling it round, and letting one side loose, the stone was urged with great force towards its object. Those who were skilled in the use of it could send the stone with an almost certainty. We are told, Judges xx. 16, that there were among the Benjamites "seven hundred chosen men left-handed: every one could sling stones at an hair-breadth, and not miss." And a good sling, it is said, could carry its full force to the distance of six hundred feet, or two hundred yards. "And, when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him." "And the Philistine," after more reproachful language, "cursed David by his Gods," a circumstance, which, no doubt, David considered as a token for good. The reply of David is such as shewed the firmness of his faith and the affection of his heart. It shewed the possession of *that* which Saul had not, it was the disposition which gained David the character of being the "man after God's own heart:"—"Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines, this day, unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know, that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into my hands." The Philistine, cased up in brass, fancied himself impregnable; his face, alone, was uncovered, to give him sight and air; and *there* David, assisted

by the Lord, directed a stone from his sling. The stone sunk into his forehead, and he fell dead upon the ground, his boasted brazen armour sounding out his knell. With the sword which Goliath intended should have hewed his antagonist in pieces, David cuts off his head, and he lays it at the feet of Saul. Again may we exclaim with Deborah and Barak, “So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord: but let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might.” (Judges v. 31.)

In the XVIIIth chapter we learn, that, in consequence of the pious and gallant and modest behaviour of David, “the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.” “And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword and to his bow, and to his girdle.”

As Saul, however, returned from his camp, in the valley of Elah, to his palace at Gibeah, and David with him, “the women came out of all cities of Israel, singing and dancing,”—“with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of music. And the women” sung, in alternate verse and chorus, and “answered one another, as they played, and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.” This excited the envy of Saul; and he twice sought to slay him, by throwing his javelin at him, as he was playing on his harp before him; but David avoided it. Saul, also, gave Merab his eldest daughter, whom he had promised to the conqueror of Goliath, to another; but gave him his second daughter Michal, in the hope of making her an instrument to his ruin. David spoke from experience when he said, Psalm xxxiv. 19, “Many are

the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all."

In the XIXth chapter is an account of four remarkable escapes of his from destruction, the first by Jonathan's assistance, the second by his own activity, the third by means of his wife, and the fourth by the immediate hand of God. And,

In the XXth chapter, David represents his distress to Jonathan, who, upon discovering Saul's wicked disposition, informs David of his danger; upon which they mutually renew their covenant of friendship, and affectionately part from each other. Ever after, David was in a state of exile from the court of his father-in-law.

In the XXIst and XXIIId chapters we read how David and a few of his servants went to Nob, where Ahimelech the high-priest, knowing nothing of the enmity of Saul against David, gave them shew-bread to relieve them in their absolute necessity, and gave David the sword of Goliath. This occasioned the murder of Ahimelech, and all the priests and the inhabitants of Nob, except Abiathar, who escaped. David fled to Achish king of Gath; but, finding that the Philistines knew and hated him for killing Goliath, he sinfully feigned himself mad. It may seem strange that he should fly to the city of Goliath, and with his sword too; but he hoped they would receive him as an enemy to Saul. Exiles and outlaws of a nation have generally been sheltered by their enemies. Themistocles the Athenian general, and Coriolanus the Roman general, when banished, fled to the enemies whom they had often conquered. David dared not fly to other nations who were at peace with Saul, for they would have delivered him up. It seems that Achish gave him a kind reception. "The true

secret appears to me," says Orton *, "to be this, that Achish had a great respect for him as a brave man, and liked him the better for having killed the proud Goliath, between whom and Achish there was no great friendship."

David, retiring from Gath, went to Adullam, where his brethren and others, to the number of four hundred, came to him, and engaged to stand by him. These were *not* a troop of banditti, roving robbers, and murderers, they were not, as *Henry* observes, wicked men of a restless spirit; they might be good, and were glad to escape Saul's fury. We find, 1 Chron. xii. 18., that they were brave men. He never entertained them till he was an outlaw, and in danger of his life, he never oppressed with them, nor loved to plunder, except upon the enemies of Israel. They cultivated the wilderness, were of service to their country, and, no doubt, many Israelites who loved David, sent them supplies †.

David carried off his aged parents, and put them under the protection of the king of Moab, who was Saul's enemy, and the great-grandson of Ruth, and related to the house of Jesse. It was, perhaps, at this time, that he went northward about mount Hermon, and married Maachah, the daughter of Talmi king of Geshur; and, in his return, married Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, as mentioned 2 Sam. iii. 2, 3. See also Psalm xlii. 6. The prophet Gad advised David to go to the land of Judah, and appear publicly, as one who was conscious of his own innocence, and trusted in God. He followed the advice, and abode in the forest of Hareth. Here Abiathar came to him, and informed him of the ruin of Nob.

* Vol. III. p. 117.

† Orton, vol. III. p. 119.

The XXIII^d chapter contains an account of David's saving Keilah ; the danger and deliverance he found there ; an interview he had with Jonathan ; Saul's pursuit of him ; and his extraordinary escape out of Saul's hands.

In my last discourse, on the character of Saul, I noticed particularly the account, in the XXIVth chapter, of David and Saul in the cave in the wilderness of Engedi ; but it is too important to the character of David to be passed over now without notice. David and his companions, in flying from Saul, had sought shelter in a cave, into which Saul himself entered alone to sleep. David and his men retired to the sides, or dark recesses, of the cave, and his companions said unto him, " Behold the day of which the Lord said unto thee, Behold, I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, that thou mayest do to him as it shall seem good unto thee." A revengeful heart would have followed their advice, but David, rather wished to " overcome evil with good," and " heap coals of fire upon his head," that he might melt him down to kindness. He, therefore, only cut off the skirt of his coat, that Saul might see he had had him in his power ; and, when Saul awaked, and arose, and went out, David went out after him, and called to Saul and shewed him the skirt of his garment, and expostulated with him, till " Saul lift up his voice and wept." He owned the justice of what David said, confessed his own guilt, and begged that David would not destroy his family when he should be king. David gave him his oath, and retired to his cave.

David and his men had continued for some time about the wilderness of Maon, in the south-east part of the inheritance of Judah, and had protected the

flocks of Nabal, a rich, but churlish, man, from robbers and wild beasts. While Nabal kept his sheep-shearing, David sent some of his servants to ask a small present of what he could best spare. Nabal having added drunkenness to his general churlish disposition, abused the servants with ill language, and represented David himself as a base fellow, who had run away from the king's service. Provoked at this, David, in wrath, resolved to destroy him and his whole family; but Abigail, the prudent wife of Nabal, met him with a present of some of the viands of the feast, and pacified him, "And David said to Abigail, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me: and blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with my own hand." Such is the effect of prudence and mildness in preventing wrath and mischief. But "it came to pass, about ten days after, that the Lord smote Nabal that he died." (verse 38.) And, David, afterwards, pleased with the amiable disposition of Abigail, took her as his wife. (ver. 42.)

In the XXVIth chapter we have an account of a second opportunity which David had of taking the life of Saul, had he been so inclined. Saul encamped with three thousand men in the wilderness of Ziph. David, one night, accompanied only by Abishai, reconnoitred the camp; and, finding that a deep sleep had fallen upon every soul in it, they entered Saul's tent, when Abishai would have killed him, but David prevented him, and took from Saul's bed's head his spear and cruise of water; and, retreating to a distance, roused Abner and the guard and Saul, and exhibited his trophies. Saul was moved, and blessed him. But David, still fearful of trusting him, again

sought shelter with Achish, as we read in the XXVIIth chapter, who would have taken him into his army ; but the jealousy of the Philistine lords prevented it, as is stated in the XXIXth chapter. And, in the XXXth, we read of David's return with his followers to Ziklag, which he found had been burnt and plundered by the Amalekites, and two of his wives carried off. They pursued after them, and recovered the captives and the spoil.

In the XXXIst chapter is the account of the defeat of the army of Israel by the Philistines, when three of the sons of Saul were slain by their swords ; and Saul, that he might not fall into the hands of the Philistines, and be scornfully and cruelly treated, having in vain endeavoured to persuade his armour-bearer to kill him, run upon his own sword ; and the armour-bearer, fearful of surviving, run upon his own sword likewise. But, on the next day, the Philistines, searching the field of battle, found the dead bodies of Saul and his sons, and stripped them of their armour, which, after sending it as a trophy of victory round the country, they put up in the temple of their idol Ashtaroth, and fixed the bodies to the wall of Bethshan ; but the men of Jabesh-gilead went, by night, and took them thence, and burnt them, and buried the bones.

On the third day after the battle, we read, in the Ist chapter of the 2d Book of Samuel, an Amalekite, expecting a reward from David, brought him Saul's crown, and pretended that he had killed him ; for which David, not knowing but that what he said was true, ordered him to be put to death, saying, (verse 16,) " Thy blood be upon thy head ; for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain the Lord's anointed." Thus fatally was the lie visited

upon himself. It is remarkable that an Amalekite should be the bearer of that crown to David, which Saul had forfeited to him by sparing the Amalekites *. (1 Sam. xv. 23.)

From the 16th verse, to the end of the chapter, is contained the *Lamentation* of David over Saul and over Jonathan his son, what is called, in the language of poetry, in these days, an *Elegy*, or mournful poem upon the death of some person, or upon some other mournful, or solemn, occasion, and it is one of the most beautiful there is. It would be beautiful from the mouth of any one, from a son of Saul, or a friend of Jonathan, or any singer, or any person; but, when we consider, that it is from the mouth of David, from him who had deserved so much from Israel and from Saul, and who, so far from having been requited by him, had been most cruelly persecuted; whose life Saul had repeatedly attempted with his own hand, and whom David, in return, when Saul was in his power, in the act of pursuing him, spared; who yet persecuted him, was again spared, and yet persecuted again,—these considerations set the *Lamentation* and the sweet singer of Israel in the most amiable and exalted point of view. As it is not long, and is never read in church as a Sunday Lesson, I will read it to you. The warrior is melted to tears, and with a heart overflowing with grief and tenderness, he exclaims,

“ The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places :

How are the mighty fallen !

Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon ;

Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,

* Orton III. p. 170.

Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.
Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew,
Neither let there be rain upon you, nor fields of offerings :

For there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away,

The shield of Saul, as though he had not been anointed with oil.

From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty

The bow of Jonathan turned not back,

And the sword of Saul returned not empty.

Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives,

And in their deaths they were not divided :

They were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions.

Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul,

Who clothed you in scarlet, with other delights ;

Who put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel.

How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle !

O Jonathan thou wast slain in thine high places.

I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan :

Very pleasant hast thou been unto me :

Thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.

How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished !

The pious and accomplished Dr. Watts, who made one of the best poetical versions of this in the English language, says, “ I believe I might fairly challenge all the antiquity of the heathens to present us with an ode of more beautiful sentiments, and greater

elegance, than this lamentation over Saul and Jonathan. It is rehearsed in the scripture indeed, but perhaps not written by inspiration, for there is scarce any thing of God or religion in it. David the mere man was a sublime poet, and God made him a prophet *.” We will not leave it, then, without a word for *God* and *religion*.

When considering the conduct of Joseph towards his brethren, and his ready forgiveness of the injury which they had done him, I said that I knew of but one circumstance in all history, sacred or profane, which surpassed it, and that was the Son of God, when he came to redeem man, but was persecuted and crucified, as he hung upon the cross, praying for his murderers, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” It will be my business, in my next discourse, when I finish the character of David, to show in what respects he was a *type* of *Christ*: but I will notice, now, how eminently he was a follower of Joseph, and a forerunner of Christ, in this respect. We look around us, in this world, and see the ungodly fighting and tearing one another; when an injury is done them, or when they *fancy* an injury is done them, or when no injury is done, but merely something which their malicious hearts pervert as something bad,—then they cast in their minds how they can do an injury in return, or something spiteful, or say something that shall wound or vex: But what is the conduct of the godly? Hear a Joseph saying “Be not grieved nor angry with yourselves that ye sold me hither:”—“It was not you that sent me hither, but God.” (Gen. xlv. 8.) Hear a David saying,—1 Sam. xxvi. 23, 24,—“The

* Works—Leeds—Vol. VII. p. 334.

Lord render to every man his righteousness and his faithfulness: for the Lord delivered thee into my hand to-day; but I would not stretch forth mine hand against the Lord's anointed. And, behold, as thy life was much set by, this day, in mine eyes, so let my life be much set by in the eyes of the Lord, and let him deliver me out of all tribulation." Hear the Saviour, amid the agonies of the cross, praying to God for his crucifiers, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And

O blessed Lord, who hast told us, that they who do not forgive others shall not be forgiven themselves, pour into all our hearts the spirit of forgiveness and brotherly love, that we may live in peace here, and, that when thou shalt come in thy glory, with thy holy angels, we may, for thy sake, be ourselves FORGIVEN. *Amen.*

SERMON XXIX.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY—2 SAMUEL II.—1 KINGS II. 10.

THE REIGN OF DAVID: THE SECOND BOOK OF SAMUEL—ISHBOSHETH SET UP BY ABNER—DAVID MADE KING OF ALL ISRAEL—BRINGS UP THE ARK TO JERUSALEM—PURPOSES TO BUILD THE TEMPLE—MEPHIBOSHETH—DAVID AND BATH-SHEBA—THE PEOPLE OF RABBAH—REBELLION OF ABSALOM—DAVID NUMBERS THE PEOPLE—THE CHARACTER OF DAVID—A TYPE OF CHRIST.

2 SAMUEL XII. 13.

*And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord.
And Nathan said unto David, The Lord, also, hath put away
thy sin; thou shalt not die.*

ACCORDING to the plan which I proposed in going through the two books of Samuel, on Sunday last, I considered the character of David before he was king, which took us to the end of the Ist chapter of the second book. The first lessons this day are the XIIth and the XIXth chapters; and on Sunday next, the XXIst and XXIVth; and, on the following Sunday, the XIIIth and XVIIth of the first book of Kings; so that there are no Sunday lessons which relate to the reign and character of Solomon; but, as that is an important part of the history of the Bible, and, consequently, of any Commentary upon it, I purpose, this day, to consider the whole of the reign and character of David, which will take us to the

and of the 10th verse of the II^d chapter of the first book of Kings ; and on Sunday next, I will consider the reign and character of Solomon, to the end of the XIth chapter ; after which we can again follow the order of the lessons.

But, before I proceed to the narrative, it is right that I should say a few words respecting the second book of Samuel, in addition to what I have, already, said upon the two together.

The second book of Samuel contains the history of David, the second king of Israel, during a period of nearly forty years, namely from the year of the world 2948 to 2988. David was crowned king at Jerusalem exactly a thousand years before Christ's baptism ; and he reigned over *all the tribes* as many years as our Lord lived on earth, namely thirty-two years and six months, having reigned seven years and six months in Hebron over the tribe of Judah only. By recording the transferring of the kingdom, from the tribe of Benjamin, to the tribe of Judah, the book relates an important step towards the accomplishment of the prophecy of Jacob on his death-bed, (Gen. xlix. 10,) that the sceptre should be with Judah when Shiloh, or the Messiah, came.

The book may be divided into three principal divisions, or portions. The *first* contains the triumphs of David, from the Ist, to the end of the Xth chapter ; the *second* the troubles of David, which were owing to his sins, together with his repentance, and recovery of the divine favour, from the XIth chapter, to the end of the XXth ; and the *third* part, David's restoration to his throne, and subsequent transactions.

The Ist chapter contains the account of an Amalekite bringing the crown of Saul to David, and say-

ing, in the hope of gaining reward from him, that *he* had slain Saul; for which, David, not knowing but that it was true, ordered him to be put to death, thus perishing in his lie. On this David uttered the tender and beautiful Elegy, or Lamentation, for Saul and Jonathan, of which I spoke, at some length, in my last.

In the II^d chapter, we have an account of David being made king in Judah, and of Ishbosheth, the son of Saul, being set up by Abner, as king over the other tribes. Abner well knew that David was appointed king by God; but interest and ambition made him set up the weak Ishbosheth, that he himself might have the chief rule under him. This occasioned a civil war; but, at length, a cessation of arms was agreed upon; and Abner having a quarrel with Ishbosheth respecting Rizpah, the concubine of Saul, we hear, in the III^d chapter, that Abner revolted from Ishbosheth, and made a league with David; and attempted to bring the Israelites to submit to him: But this not suiting the policy and ambition of Joab, he basely assassinated him, for which David, fearing to punish him, reprov'd him, and had Abner buried with funeral honours, and lamented for him: but he said to his own attendants, verse 39, “the Lord shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness.”

In the IVth chapter we have an account how Baanah and Rechab, of the tribe of Benjamin, conspired against Ishbosheth, and assassinated him, and brought his head to David, thinking he would have rewarded them for it; but he ordered them to be put to death, and hung up as monuments of his detestation of treachery and murder.

David's conduct gaining the love of the Israelites,

and having reigned over the tribe of Judah, in Hebron, for seven years and six months, upwards of three hundred and forty thousand soldiers, from the different tribes, assembled to make him king over all Israel, as we read in the XIIth chapter of the Ist book of Chronicles, and feasted before the king, with royal magnificence, for three days. After this, David removed northward, to Jerusalem; and reduced the proud Jebusites, who had kept possession of it till now. The Philistines being resolved to overturn his government before it was established, made war upon him, and were twice defeated.

The ark of God, in which was contained the two tables of testimony, having been, for forty six years, in the house of Abinadab, in Gibeah, David resolved to bring it up to Jerusalem, and, in the VIth chapter, we read that he went with thirty thousand men to bring it up. But, instead of carrying it on the shoulders of the priests, as was ordered by the law, they followed the example of the Philistines, when they wanted to get rid of it, and set it upon a new cart with oxen, and, when it shook, Uzzah, one of the sons of Abinadab, put forth his hand to hold it, for which he was struck dead;—so important is it, in all things, to follow the orders of God. On this, the ark was carried to the house of Obed-edom, where it remained for three months, and brought the blessing of God upon all the family and household; and, then, David went, and had it brought up in the right manner, and was so rejoiced at the thought of having the ark of God with him, that he played on his harp and danced before it. His wife Michal, the daughter of Saul, took upon her to be offended at this, and to think that she knew better than David what was becoming him, and reproached him for it: but God

visited the insolence upon her, and, from that day, she bore no child.

God had promised, (Deut. xii. 5.) that, when his people were settled in the land of Canaan, he would choose himself a place to set his name there, and David, in his love to God, and wishing, perhaps, for the honour of the work, “said unto Nathan the prophet,” vii. 2, “See, now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains. And Nathan said to the king, Go, do all that is in thine heart; for the Lord is with thee.” David and Nathan, however, spoke too positively, and without consulting God, for God came to Nathan that night, and told him, that he accepted his *intention*, but that (on account of the blood which he had shed—as it is said, 1 Chron. xxii. 8, in the wars in which he had been engaged) it should be done by his son; but that he might prepare materials, and that his family should be established, and that the everlasting king, the Messiah, should spring from his loins.

The VIIIth chapter gives an account of five several wars, in all of which David was successful; and, at verse 14, it is said, “he put garrisons in Edom; throughout all Edom put he garrisons, and all they of Edom became David’s servants.” Thus was fulfilled the prophecy which God had spoken to Rebecca, between seven and eight hundred years before, concerning her sons, or rather the posterity of her sons, Esau and Jacob, Genesis xxv. 23, that “the elder should serve the younger.”

David did not, like many, when in prosperity and greatness, forget his promises and his former connections, for, in the IXth chapter, we find him, recollecting the tender friendship of Jonathan, and making inquiry after the house of Saul, when he

discovers Mephibosheth, the crippled son of Jonathan, whom he receives in the most friendly manner, and provides for him and his dependents.

In the Xth chapter we have an account of David sending ambassadors to Hanun, the king of the children of Ammon, to condole with him upon the death of his father ; but the princes persuaded Hanun that he merely sent them as spies, so Hanun treated them with great contempt, and sent them back. David, fired with indignation, commenced a war against the Ammonites, and he twice defeated their armies though enforced with vast numbers of Syrians.

The XIth and XIIth chapters give an account of a transaction, over which delicacy, respect, and pity would wish to draw a veil ; but that the Holy Spirit of God hath thought proper to record it, both as a warning and an encouragement to persons, in all succeeding ages, I mean the history of David and Bathsheba and Uriah. It is a warning to the most pious saints to guard their hearts, and “ take heed lest they fall.” It is an encouragement to the greatest sinners to repent and turn to God, and he will abundantly pardon.

The XIIth chapter I have just read, as the first lesson at this morning’s service, and the previous events are too well known to need a particular statement. I will merely give the general outline : David, instead of being with his army at the siege of Rabbah, was living in ease and luxury at home, a season which the devil never fails to employ to his own wicked ends. David saw Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, who, though a Hittite, was, no doubt, a proselyte, or convert, to the religion of the Israelites, and a worshipper of the true God. David committed adultery with Bathsheba ; and, as the crime, when

known, would have exposed her to be punished by death, by the law of Moses, and him to public shame, he procured that Uriah should be killed in battle; and David, then, married the object and partner of his sin, and she bore a son.

We are not told, that, during this time, David had any remorse of conscience or true repentance for his sins. It is most probable that he had not; such is the besotting, and blinding, and hardening nature of sin, that, while he was anxious to prevent its becoming public to the world, he had no thought of the God who “seeth in secret,” and “is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity.” Nathan, therefore, was sent to bring him to a sense of his sin. This, however, was not done by a direct accusation, which he would, probably, as directly, have denied; but, by the more respectful, and gentle, and convincing means of a story, or parable; he stated a case of great meanness and cruelty, and, when David, full of indignation, said, verse 5, that “the man that hath done this thing shall surely die!” Nathan returned it upon his own conscience, “Thou art the man!” (verse 7,) and laid all his sin in open array before him. What did David do? Did he *deny* the sin? Did he order his convincer and reprover to be put to death, or punished? Did he palliate his sin, and say, that it was common, or that it was a trifling and excusable fault? No. “David said unto Nathan, I HAVE SINNED AGAINST THE LORD.” The king of Israel said it to the prophet, with a deep and sincere repentance, “And Nathan said unto David, The Lord, also, hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.” That is, neither now, by his own sentence just past, nor by any sudden stroke and judgment from God, nor yet eternally; but, still, he was to be

scourged by temporal evils, as a wholesome discipline to himself, and as a warning to others.

This fall of “the man after God’s own heart,” has been the occasion of much offence to some, and of scoff to others; but this arises from their not considering the nature of man, his corrupt fallen nature, nor the nature of repentance, and the all-sufficient merits of Christ, and the free grace and mercy of God. It is true, that “the wicked shall be turned into hell, with all the people that forget God.” (Psalm ix. 17.)

But, of whom will the company of *heaven* be composed? *Not* of those who have *never sinned*: for, where is the man—CHRIST ONLY EXCEPTED—who never sinned? But, of those who *have been sinners*, and whose sins—whose scarlet sins, in many,—are washed white in the blood of the Lamb. (Isaiah i. 18., Rev. vii. 14.) And God judgeth not as man judgeth; many sins, which man accounteth small, are great in the eyes of God. Many things which man accounteth not as sin, are sin in the eye of the Holy One of Israel. We defend not David. His sin, and his repentance, and his forgiveness are with God. But, let those who are inclined “to throw stones” (John viii. 7.) at David, the adulterer and the murderer, consider what is the purity required of Christians under the Gospel. Though they may not have broken the VIth and the VIIth commandments, in the most common, and worst sense; have they not broken them in the sense of our blessed Lord, in the Vth chapter of St. Matthew, and been *angry* with their brethren without sufficient cause, and looked on women to lust after them? (22, 28.)

David, on this occasion, it is said, composed the LIst and other of the penitential Psalms.

[It is said, at the 31st verse of the XIIth chapter, that David, when he had taken Rabbah, “brought forth the people that were therein, and put them *under* saws, and *under* harrows of iron, and *under* axes of iron, and made them *pass through* the brick kiln: and thus did he unto all the cities of the children of Ammon.” From these words, it has been said,—and not without some appearance of justice,—that David was guilty of great cruelty towards the Ammonites. But the word which is here translated *under*, means, likewise, *to*; and, thus, to put the people *to* saws, harrows, axes, and the brick-kiln, means no more, than to employ them, as slaves, in the most menial and laborious offices, such as sawing, making iron harrows, hewing wood, making bricks. Thus *we* say, to put a person *to* the plow, *to* the anvil, and so on. Indeed, we speak, likewise, of laying men *under* tribute, that is obliging them to pay tribute. This matter occurs, again, 1 Chron. xx. 3., where it is still worse translated, and it is said, that David “*cut* them with saws,” and so forth, but it should be translated there, also, in the same way*.]

The threatenings of God by Nathan, that he would raise up, or permit, evil to David in his own house, soon began to be fulfilled; and, in the XIIIth chapter, we have an account of the shocking conduct of Amnon to his half-sister Tamar, and of the bloody revenge which Absalom took upon him for it, after an interval of two years. For which he, also, was out-lawed, and was not restored to his father's favour

* See Orton's Exposition, Vol. III. p. 225, and Horne's Introduction, I. 627; also Ormerod's Remarks on Dr. Priestley's Disquisitions, &c. 2d edition, p. 72.

but with great difficulty. Of this we have an account in the XIVth chapter.

In the XVth chapter, we have an account of Absalom rebelling against his father, and procuring himself to be crowned king; and of David being obliged to fly for his life from Jerusalem; and in the XVIth, XVIIth, and XVIIIth chapters, the farther progress of this unnatural rebellion is given, till it ends in the death of Absalom. The natural affection of the *father* got the better of the *man* and of the *king*, and David gave way to an excess of lamentation for his son Absalom.

The time will not allow me to dwell upon the clemency of David, in forgiving Shimei, and his generosity to Mephibosheth, and his gratitude to Barzillai, mentioned in the XIXth chapter, nor on Sheba's rebellion, in the XXth; nor on the three years' famine, on account of Saul's slaying the Gibeonites, recorded in the XXIst, where, likewise, we read of David's burying the bones of Saul and Jonathan, and his victories over the Philistines and their giants.

The XXIIId chapter is "a Song," or Psalm, "which David spake," or sung, "in the day that the Lord delivered him out of the hand of his enemies." It was, probably, at first, only a form of private devotion, which he used after his victory and success; and was, afterwards, published, as we have it in the XVIIIth Psalm, to excite more lively gratitude and true religion throughout his dominions.

The XXIIId chapter contains an account of the last words of David, which were delivered by the spirit of prophecy, with a list of David's worthies, and the exploits of some of the most eminent of them.

In the XXIVth chapter an account is given of the sin of David in numbering the people, and the judgment he brought upon the kingdom in consequence, by God's sending a grievous pestilence, which was stayed upon David's repentance, who built an altar to God in memory of the deliverance. In the first verse, it is said, "And, again, the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them, to say, Go, number Israel and Judah." What has been said, before, respecting God's hardening Pharaoh's heart will equally apply here. We read, 1 Chron. xxi. 1, that Satan suggested this, and God *permitted* it, because his anger was kindled against Israel for their rebellion, their luxury, and their confidence in their numbers and strength; a thing too common in prosperous and peaceful kingdoms. The seventy Greek interpreters, and other ancient versions, render the verse somewhat different from ours, "The anger of the Lord being kindled against Israel, moved David to number them:" which is, no doubt, the sense of it.

The Ist chapter of the 1st book of Kings gives an account of the infirmities of David in his advanced life, the attempt which Adonijah, his son by his wife Haggith, made to be king; Nathan's contrivance to secure the settlement to Solomon; his nomination by David, and advancement to the throne; and the happy consequence of this, in the confusion of Adonijah and his party.

The IId chapter, to the end of the 10th verse, gives David's last instructions to Solomon, and records his death.

Doctor Delany, in the conclusion of his Historical Account of the Life of King David, says,

"David's is a character which stands single, in the

accounts of the world ; equally eminent and unrivalled. For, not to insist upon his great personal accomplishments, such as beauty, stature, strength, swiftness and eloquence ; his character is sufficiently distinguished by the noblest qualities, endowments and events.

“ Exalted from a humble shepherd to a mighty monarch, without the least tincture of pride, disdain, or envy ! Quite otherwise, remarkably humble in exaltation ; or rather, humbled by it ! Exalted unenvied ! Exalted himself, and equally exalting the state he ruled : raising it from contempt, poverty and oppression, to wealth, dignity, and sway ! A man experienced in every vicissitude of fortune and life, and equal to them all ! Thoroughly tried in adversity, and tempted by success ! Yet still superior ! Cruelly and unjustly persecuted, yet not to be provoked even to just revenge ! In the saddest and suddenest reverse of fortune, depressed by nothing but the remembrance of guilt ; and, in consequence of that, unhumiliated by any thing but God !

“ To sum up all ; a true believer, and zealous adorer of God ; a teacher of his law and worship, and inspirer of his praise ! A glorious example, a perpetual and inexhaustible fountain of true piety ! A consummate and unequalled hero, a skilful and fortunate captain ! A steady patriot, a wise ruler, a faithful, a generous, and a magnanimous friend ! And, what is yet rarer, a no-less-generous and magnanimous enemy ! A true penitent, a divine musician, a sublime poet, and an inspired prophet ! By birth a peasant, by merit a prince ! In youth, a hero ; in manhood, a monarch ; in age, a saint !”

Reading, in his Sermons, speaking of his penitence, and Shimei's cursing him, says, “ when Abishai,

soldier-like, asked “Why should this dead dog curse my Lord the King? Let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head:” the king meekly answered, “Let him curse; he has God’s permission for it. Who then shall say, why hast thou done so? It may be the Lord will look on my afflictions, and requite me good for his cursing this day.” He adds

“Such was David’s opinion of his own demerits, in contemplation of the injuries which he had done to God and man by his sins. As he had sinned grossly, so he repented bitterly. And his sins were of very short continuance in comparison of his repentance. Very contrary to the practice of most men, who spend the best of their days in the service of the world and the flesh, and depend upon a little of their last and worst time to reconcile themselves to God, and prepare their souls for his kingdom*.”

Orton says of him, in few words, that he “was an eminent saint, a valiant hero, an inspired prophet, and the sweet psalmist of Israel; he to whom we are indebted for the most excellent part of our public devotions†.”

It remains only that I should say a few words on David as a type of Christ.

Our Lord, in one of his conversations with his disciples after his resurrection,—Luke xxiv. 44.—said, “These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the *Psalms* concerning me.” In the *Psalms*, then, we look for Christ, and for David as a type of him.

In Luke i. 32, 33, the angel Gabriel, in his saluta-

* Vol. III. p. 73.

† Vol. III. p. 87.

tion of the blessed virgin, speaking of Jesus, says, “the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.” Christ, was accordingly, when on earth, often addressed as the “son of David.”

The XC1st Psalm was applied by the Tempter,—Matt. iv. 6, 7.—to the Messiah: nor did our Lord object to the application, but only to the false inference, which his adversary suggested from it.

David, in Psalm XL, saith, “Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire—Lo I come to do thy will:” and we might, at first, suppose him to declare, only in his own person, that obedience is better than sacrifice; but, from Hebrews x. 5, we learn, that Messiah, in that place, speaketh of his advent in the flesh to abolish the sacrifices of the law, and to do away sin once for all.

The tender complaint in the XL1st Psalm (verse 9.) “Mine own familiar friend in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lift up his heel against me,” undoubtedly might be, and probably was, originally, uttered by David, upon the revolt of his old friend and counsellor, Ahithophel, to the party of his rebellious son, Absalom. But we are certain, from John xiii, 18, that this Scripture was fulfilled, when Christ was betrayed by his apostate disciple Judas,—“I speak not of you all; I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scriptures may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me, hath lift up his heel against me.”

Psalm LXIX is five times referred to in the Gospels, as being uttered by the prophet, in the person of the Messiah. The imprecations, or rather predictions, at the latter end of it, are applied, Romans

xi. 9, 10, to the Jews; and to Judas, Acts i. 20, where the CIXth Psalm is, also, cited, as prophetic of the sore judgments which should befall that arch-traitor, and the wretched nation of which he was a type.

Christ applied the XXIIId Psalm to himself, by beginning it in the midst of his sufferings upon the cross,—Matt. xxvii. 46,—“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Three other verses of it are, in the New Testament applied to him; and the words of the 8th verse, were actually used by the chief priests, when they reviled him, Matt. xxvii. 43. “He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him.”

In the words of Psalm xxxi. 6, “Into thy hands I commend my spirit,” Christ delivered up his soul to God.

From the latter part of the XVIth Psalm, St. Peter, Acts ii. 25, preaches the resurrection of Jesus, and, lo! three thousand souls are converted by the Sermon.

The IId Psalm is, to all appearance, a hymn composed by David, the anointed of Jehovah, when by him crowned with victory, and placed triumphant on the sacred hill of Sion. But, in Acts iv. 25, we find the Apostles, with one voice, declaring the Psalm to describe the exaltation of Jesus Christ, and of the opposition raised against his Gospel, both by Jew and Gentile.

Of the XVIIIth Psalm we are told, 2 Samuel xxii. 1, that “David spake before the Lord the words of that song, in the day that the Lord delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul.” But in Romans xv. 9, the 50th verse of that psalm is brought as a proof, that “the Gen-

tiles should glorify God for his mercy in Jesus Christ, as it is written, For this cause will I confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name."

The CXth Psalm is cited by Christ himself,—Matt. xxii. 44,—as treating of his exaltation, kingdom and priesthood.

And, lastly, "the fruit of David's body," which God is said, Psalm cxxxii. 12, to have promised that he would "place upon his throne," is asserted, Acts ii. 30, to be Jesus Christ*.

When blind Bartimeus, the son of Timeus, sat by the way side, and he heard that Jesus of Nazareth passed by, he cried out, "Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me." Jesus said unto him, "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And, immediately, he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way" So,—may *we*, in a SPIRITUAL sense, cry out to the son of David, now exalted to heaven, to "have mercy on us." May he reply "Go thy way; thy FAITH hath made thee whole." And may we immediately RECEIVE OUR SPIRITUAL SIGHT, and FOLLOW JESUS IN THE WAY.

* See Preface to Bishop Horne's Commentary on the Psalms, p. xi.—xvii.

SERMON XXX.

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.—1 KINGS II. 12.—XI.

THE REIGN OF SOLOMON: THE TWO BOOKS OF KINGS—THE FIRST BOOK OF KINGS—ADONIJAH'S ATTEMPT—SOLOMON'S MARRIAGE—HIS CHOICE OF WISDOM—HIS JUDGMENT—THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE—DEDICATION—THE QUEEN OF SHEBA—SOLOMON'S APOSTACY—THE PRINCE OF PEACE.

1 KINGS iii. 11—14.

And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment; Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo! I have given thee a wise and understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. And I have, also, given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honour: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days. And, if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days.

THE course of the Sunday Lessons would lead me, this day, to consider the latter part of the reign of king David, particularly the famine, on account of Saul's having slain the Gibeonites, of which we read in the XXIst chapter of the IId Book of Samuel, which is the first lesson at this morning's service, and David's sin in numbering the people, in the XXIVth, which is the first lesson at this evening's service; but, as I stated in the introduction to my

last discourse, none of our Sunday Lessons being taken from the reign of Solomon, I concluded the history of David on Sunday last, and shall, this day, consider that part of the first book of Kings, from the 12th verse of the IId chapter, to the end of the XIth chapter, as his history is too important to be passed over in an explanation of the Bible.

It will be right, however, that I should begin with a few remarks upon the two books of Kings in general, and upon the first in particular.

The two Books of Kings are closely connected with those of Samuel. The origin and gradual increase of the united kingdom of Israel, under Saul and his successor David, having been described in the latter, the books now under consideration relate its height of glory, under Solomon; its division into two kingdoms, under his son and successor Rehoboam, the causes of that division, and the decline of the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah, until their final overthrow; the ten tribes being carried captive into Assyria by Shalmanezzer, and Judah and Benjamin to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar.

Authors are divided in their opinions by whom the books were written; but the most probable one seems to be, that they were written by Ezra from the histories of the reigns of the different kings, by the prophets and seers who lived at the same time with them.

The divine authority of these books is proved by the many predictions they contain. They are cited as authentic, and as of *the Scriptures*, by our Lord, (Luke iv. 25—27,) and by his apostles, (Acts vii. 47. Rom. xi. 2—4. James v. 17, 18. ;) and they have been constantly received as such by the Jewish and

Christian churches in every age. Their truth and authenticity, also, receive additional confirmation from the corresponding testimonies of ancient profane writers.

The First Book of Kings embraces a period of one hundred and twenty-six years, from the anointing of Solomon, and his admission as a partner in the throne of David, in the year of the world 2989, to the death of Jehoshaphat, in the year 3115. It may be divided into two principal parts, the *first* containing the history of the undivided kingdom, under Solomon, from the Ist, to the end of the XIth chapter; the *second* the history of the divided kingdom, under Rehoboam and his successors, and Jeroboam and his successors, from the XIIth, to the end of the XXIIId chapter, that is, the end of the book. We begin, now, at the IId chapter, the 12th verse.

We have, here, an account of an attempt of Adonijah to supplant Solomon in his kingdom, which cost him his life; also the death of Joab, who sided with Adonijah; and of Shimei, whom both David and Solomon had pardoned, but on whom Solomon laid certain conditions, or injunctions, which Shimei broke through, and, therefore, justly forfeited a life, which his own turbulent and malicious disposition had long rendered obnoxious to David and his son.

The IIIId chapter gives us, first, an account of the marriage of Solomon with the daughter of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. She was, probably, a proselyte to the religion of the Jews, (and, therefore, the marriage was not sinful,) since no mention is made, in the XIth chapter, of the gods of Egypt, among those by whom Solomon was seduced; and, in the XLVth Psalm, which celebrates the marriage of Solomon

with his Queen, she is represented as a worshipper of the true God.

In the next place, we hear of Solomon, that he “loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of David his father.” “And the king went to Gibeon,” where the tabernacle was, “to sacrifice there: for that was the great high place; a thousand burnt offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar.” And “in Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon, in a dream by night; and God said, Ask what I shall give thee. And Solomon said, Thou hast showed unto thy servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. And, now, O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king, instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out, or come in.” Solomon was, now, about twenty years of age; but he was only as a little child with respect to his skill about public affairs; he knew not how to rule and behave wisely, for want of experience, and he acknowledges his ignorance and weakness. He proceeds, “And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. Give, therefore, thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so-great people? And the speech pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this thing.” And, then, follow the words of my text.

The *wisdom* or “understanding heart” which

Solomon here asks of God, that he might “judge his people,” might, to an unthinking mind, appear to be only *political*, or *worldly wisdom*; but it is necessary to observe, that he says, farther, “that I may discern between good and bad,” which he could not do without a clear discovery of God’s Law, which included *religious*, or *spiritual wisdom*, likewise, as we find from Solomon’s own description of *Wisdom*, in the book of Proverbs, where—ii. 4, 5.—he says, “If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.” And, as David said, in the cxixth Psalm, verse 18,—“Open thou mine eyes, that I may see the wondrous things of thy law.”

The Greeks, who collected characters and events from all nations, and attributed them to their own heroes, have taken this *choice of Solomon*, and attributed it to their own *Hercules*, and made him give the preference to *Virtue*, when solicited by *Pleasure*, or *Vice*, and *Virtue*. But the *choice of Solomon* is the one upon which we should fix our eye and our heart, and ourselves chuse the *heavenly wisdom*: and God has promised, (Matt. vi. 33,) that what he did, in the case of Solomon, he will do to every individual who seeks *first* “the kingdom of God and his righteousness;” that he will give “both riches and honour,” that is, food and clothing, and all other things, at such times, and in such portions, whether great, or small, as are really best and most convenient for us.

The III^d chapter, from the 16th verse, gives an account of an occasion upon which Solomon was called to exercise his wisdom in judgment. Two women were brought to bed, in the same house, at nearly the

same time, and the child of one of them dying, she took it, while the mother of the other child slept, and put her dead child in the place of the living child, and took that away. The mother, awaking, saw how it was, and claimed her living child; which the other refused. The case was referred to Solomon; and, there being no *evidence* upon which he could decide, he ordered the living child to be cut in two, and half given to each. Envy, a consciousness that it was not her own, a shame of being detected in falsehood and wrong, operated in the bosom of the mother of the *dead* child, and she *consented* to the division: but the yearnings of a mother, and a consciousness that it *was* her child, operated in the breast of the other, and, sooner than see it *slain* she consented to *give it up*. "Then the king answered and said, Give *her* the living child, and in no wise slay it: *she* is the mother thereof. And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged, and they feared the king: for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him to do judgment."

The IVth chapter gives an account of the grandeur, magnificence and wisdom of Solomon, the extent of his dominions, and the happiness of his subjects. He instructed his subjects by his *Proverbs*, and his *Songs*, which were numerous; and he was well skilled in what we call *Natural History*, or the works of God's creation, of which he wrote at large. What a treasure had all these been, had it pleased God that they should have been preserved to this time! And

The Vth chapter contains articles of agreement between Solomon and Hiram, king of Tyre, for materials for building the temple, of which there is a longer account in the 2d book of Chronicles, the IId chapter, and also of David's preparations for

building the temple in the 1st book of Chronicles, the XXIIId chapter to the end of the XXIXth, or end of the book.

The VIth and VIIth chapters give an account of the building of the Temple, and the ornaments and furniture of it. Commentators differ much in the manner in which they understand the accounts which are given here, and in the 2d book of Chronicles, and by Ezekiel, in his XLth, XLIst, and XLIIId chapters. I will endeavour to give you the best and shortest account of it that I can. But I must, first, observe, that there is some difficulty in respect to the measure, the *cubit*, which some fix at eighteen inches; but others say, that the Jewish *sacred cubit* was upwards of twenty-one inches. The Temple stood on mount Moriah, an eminence of the mountainous ridge called mount Sion, (Psalm cxxxii. 13, 14,) which had been purchased by David of Araunah, (called also, Ornan and Harun) the Jebusite, when the plague was stayed there, which was sent on his numbering the people, and where he offered sacrifice. (2 Sam. xxiv. 23, 24. 1 Chron. xxi. 25.)

The form of the Temple was taken from that of the Tabernacle; but the Temple was higher in proportion. The Tabernacle was thirty cubits long, ten wide, and ten high. The Temple was twice the length and width, that is sixty cubits long, and twenty wide, and three times the height, that is thirty cubits. Of the length, the Holy Place took forty cubits, and the Holy of Holies twenty cubits. Round three sides of the Temple, the front, or east, being left for the entrance, were three rows, or stories, of chambers, to half the height. Above these, in the Holy Place, were windows; the Holy of Holies had none. At the east end was the porch, which we

are told, 1 Kings vi. 3, was twenty cubits long, according to the breadth of the house, and ten cubits wide ; and, 2 Chron. iii. 4, it is said, that it was one hundred and twenty cubits high, that is four times as high as the Temple itself ; so that it was more like a *tower*, or steeple, than what we call a *porch*, and the outside form of the whole building was not unlike that of some of our ancient churches, with a body and lower side aisles, and a lofty tower in front. The chancels of our churches bear some resemblance to the Holy of Holies : but that was the same width as the body of the Temple, and was separated from it by a *veil*, or curtain. There were no windows, as I have just stated, in the Holy of Holies, and nothing was in it, but the Ark of the covenant, and the cherubims, and the Divine Shechinah, or Light, or Token of God's presence. The walls were ornamented with figures of palm trees and cherubims. Into this no one ever entered but the high priest, and that but once in a year, on the great day of atonement.

In the Holy place stood, the golden candlestick, the table with the shew-bread, and the golden-altar, upon which the incense was offered. At the entrance of the porch stood the two pillars called *Jachin* and *Boaz*, which names signify *that God alone was the support of the Temple*. Immediately round the temple was the inner court, or court of the priests, in which, before the porch, stood the altar of burnt offerings and the brazen laver. Beyond the priests' court, and encompassing it on three sides, the east, the north, and the south, was the court of Israel, which was divided into two parts, the inner for the men, and the outer for the women, and beyond, and entirely compassing this, the

court of the Gentiles, from which they were not allowed to advance nearer to the Holy Place. These several courts had porticos, and galleries, and apartments, and store rooms around them. It is calculated that the three courts of the Temple, besides the rooms and other places in it, contained ample space for above five hundred thousand persons to be in the temple at the same time*. When mention is made in Scripture of *the Temple*, we are to take care to distinguish what is intended, whether the Holy Place, or Temple properly so called, or the whole pile of building, with its courts, porticos, and apartments, or only some particular part, as the court of the priests, or of the Israelites, or of the Gentiles.

Magnificent as every part of the temple was, the holy place, or sanctuary, infinitely surpassed the rest in splendour. Its appearance, according to Josephus, had every thing that could strike the mind, or astonish the sight: for it was covered on every side with plates of gold, so that, when the sun rose upon it, it reflected so strong and dazzling an effulgence, that the eye of the spectator was obliged to turn away, being no more able to sustain its radiance than the splendour of the sun. To strangers who were approaching, it appeared, at a distance, like a

* Jones's Scripture Antiquities, p. 29.

Calmet says, that "The level area on which the *temple* stood was a furlong square, or one hundred and twenty-five paces." Whoever will step one hundred and twenty-five paces, in any large field, and see how small a space a square of that size is, to hold such buildings, and such a concourse of people, will doubt the accuracy of this statement. Indeed there is so much uncertainty and contradiction in the different accounts of the temple, that it seems not possible to attain more than some general ideas of it.

mountain covered with snow : for, where it was not decorated with plates of gold, it was extremely white and glistering, being built, probably, of white polished marble. “ A father of the church informs us, that the music of the temple, on great occasions, from the multitude of performers,” and voices, “ and the elevation of the place, was heard to the distance of ten miles *.”

* Jones of Nayland’s Sermon on the Nature and Excellence of Music. Works in 12 vols., vol. VI. p. 120.

This appears a very extraordinary distance to hear such sounds ; but five hundred thousand voices raised to the utmost, with instruments, reverberated by the buildings, but in a place open at the top, and elevated like the temple, must have had an astonishing effect. The author has looked into the Encyclopædia Britannica, under the article *Acoustics*, for some elucidation of the matter ; but finds nothing respecting the distances at which sounds may be heard. He has no doubt, that he, once, heard the Tower guns, at the distance of about forty-five miles. He was riding over Orwell hill, in Cambridgeshire, one September, (probably, 1787) with his father, when they both thought that they heard very distant thunder. But the atmosphere shewed no token of thunder ; and his father recollected that it was the anniversary of his late Majesty’s coronation, it was the hour of their firing, and the wind was favourable, and his father said, it must be *the Tower guns*.

The story of the sentinel at Windsor is well known, though the author does not know on what authority it stands. He was accused of sleeping upon his post, at night ; when he said, in his defence, that he was lying down, it was true, but he was not asleep, and that he heard St. Paul’s clock, at London, strike *thirteen*, when it should have struck *twelve*. A messenger was sent off to London, to inquire if this was the case, and he brought back word that it was so. Windsor is twenty-two miles, by the road, from London.

On referring to Derham’s Physico-Theology, (Book iv. chap. iii. 3d edition, p. 134, note 27.), he says, that guns fired off at Florence were heard plainly at Leghorn, fifty-five miles in a straight line, notwithstanding the country between is hilly and woody, and the wind

To assist in forming some idea of the immensity of the treasure expended in building the temple, an ingenious expositor has made the following calculations.

David and his princes assigned thereto one hundred and eight thousand talents of gold, one million and seventeen thousand talents of silver, both which together amounted to about nine hundred and thirty-nine millions, two hundred and ninety-nine thousand, six hundred and eighty-seven pounds sterling; and, in weight, amounted to about forty-six thousand tons weight of gold and silver: and, supposing that the above amount were to be removed from one place to another, in waggons, every waggon to be laden with four tons, it would require eleven thousand five hundred waggons to contain it: and, if every waggon were drawn by four horses, allowing the space of twenty yards to every waggon and horses, the line

not favouring, only very calm and still. That the Leghorn guns are often heard sixty miles off, at Porto Ferraro; that, when the French bombarded Geneva, it was heard near Leghorn ninety miles distant: and, in the Messina insurrection, the guns were heard from thence as far as Augusta and Syracuse, about one hundred Italian miles. Dr. Hearn tells us of guns fired at Stockholm, in 1685, that were heard one hundred and eighty English miles; and, in the Dutch war, 1672, the guns were heard above two hundred miles. Note 25, p. 130, he says, the biggest bell in Europe is reckoned to be at Erfurt in Germany, which they say may be heard twenty-four miles.

On talking on this subject with a parishioner, he informs the author, that he has heard people say, that they have heard the Tower guns at Gransden, which must be from forty-five to fifty miles in a straight line. That he himself has heard Gransden *chimes* five miles off. That he often hears Bourn bells at Gransden, a distance of about three miles, and he has heard Brampton bells down the water to Hemingford, about six miles. He has heard the horn of the coach, on a still evening, three miles.

would reach nearly one hundred and thirty-one miles.

About one hundred and eighty-three thousand six hundred men, Hebrews and Canaanites, were employed in building it. Every thing was made ready ere it came to the spot, that nothing was to be done but to join the materials; and yet it took seven years to build it*.

The VIIIth chapter gives an account of the bringing the ark into the temple, and its solemn dedication. The sight must have been glorious indeed! It was the feast of tabernacles, and, probably, the year of Jubilee; and, no doubt, on this occasion, not only the males, but the women and the children capable of travelling would be present,—the courts full, containing between five and six hundred thousand persons,—the king, the most magnificent and the wisest the earth ever saw, upon his throne, or platform, of brass, before the altar of burnt sacrifice—behold him kneeling before the King of kings, praying to him, and the cloud, the token of the Divine Presence, descending and taking possession of the temple, but retiring into the Holy of Holies and the Divine Effulgence breaking forth: see him rise from his knees, and then blessing and exhorting his people, concluding with these words, verse 61, “Let your heart, therefore, be perfect with the Lord your God, to walk in his statutes, and to keep his commandments, as at this day.”

The IXth chapter gives an account of God’s appearing the second time to Solomon, which it is generally supposed was the same night after the dedication of the temple and his prayer; but it, rather,

* Towne’s Automatical Camera Obscura, Vol. III. p. 92.

seems, from the first verse, that it was some years after, when he had finished all his buildings, and was in danger of growing proud, and, therefore, God gave him this friendly caution.

The chapter, also, gives an account of the mutual presents between him and Hiram ; with some account of his buildings and navy, his trade with Ophir and the immense treasure it brought him thence. And, yet, Solomon, who knew the sweets of trade, assures us, Prov. iii. 13—17., “ Happy is the man that findeth *wisdom*, and the man that getteth *understanding* ; for the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies ; and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. *Length of days* is in her *right* hand ; and in her *left* hand *riches* and *honour*. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.”

The Xth chapter gives an account of the visit of the queen of Sheba to Solomon, to see his magnificence and to hear his wisdom : “ And she said to the king,” verse 6., “ It was a true report that I heard in mine own land, of thy acts and of thy wisdom. Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it : and, behold ! the *half* was not told me : thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard. Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom. Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel : because the Lord loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee king to do judgment and justice.”

Our Lord made use of this circumstance to draw from it a valuable piece of instruction and warning

to the Scribes and Pharisees. (Matt. xii. 42.) "The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it : for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold! a greater than Solomon is here."

The remainder of the chapter gives a farther account of the wealth and grandeur of Solomon. And, yet, we are told by our Lord, Matt. vi. 28, 29., "that, even Solomon, in all his glory," in his clothing of white embroidered and decorated with gold, "was not arrayed like one of the lilies of the field," and this he uses as an argument why *we* should trust in God, not only for clothing, but, also, for food, and whatever we may need. "Shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"—"Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things."

There are few precepts which deserve and require to be more repeatedly brought forward and enforced than that of St. Paul, 1 Cor. x. 12, "let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." The first man fell in a state of innocence, and under comparatively small occasion of temptation: we, last Sunday, had to lament the fall of "the man after God's own heart;" and, now, in the XIth chapter, we are called upon to witness and lament the fall of the wisest of men. It was a remark of the prophet Hosea, iv. 11, that women "take away the heart." And, here, we are told, that "Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians and Hittites," who turned away his heart to their gods; and he, whom we have before seen building the most magnificent temple that was ever

erected to the great Jehovah, we, now, see building “an high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the children of Ammon.” Wherefore God said, that he would take away the greater part of his kingdom from his son, and stir up adversaries against him. Bishop Wilson, in one of his Evening Prayers, has these words, which all would do well to learn, and frequently, if not nightly, to use: “Lord, the frailty of man, without thee, cannot but fall: in all temptations, therefore, I beseech thee to succour me, that no sin may ever get the dominion over me. Give me a salutary dread of the corruption of my own heart:—Make me truly sensible of the end of sin, and mindful of my own infirmities and backslidings.—Vouchsafe unto all sinners a true sense of their unhappy state, a fear of thy judgments, and grace and strength to break their bonds. Enlighten my soul with saving truth;—Correct me in mercy, and bring me back when I go astray. Make me ever mindful of my latter end, and fix in my heart a lively sense of the happiness and misery of the world to come.”

At the end of the chapter, we are told of the death of Solomon; but it is not stated, here, that he repented and turned to God before his death. But, as it is probable that he wrote the book of *Ecclesiastes* after this, in which he states that he had tried all worldly things, and found all but “vanity and vexation of spirit,” he sums up all with this, “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.”

In David, we behold a type of Christ, the Messiah, principally in his suffering and persecuted state; and in Solomon, we behold a type of him as the Prince of Peace and King of Glory: and will the Great Anti-type agree that his type should perish for ever? Will not He “redeem his soul from deceit and violence,” and is not “his blood precious in his sight?” (Psalm lxxii. 14.)

In the LXXIId Psalm, we have a prayer of David for Solomon, in which he foretells his peaceful and glorious reign; and, under that figure, in most lively and beautiful colours, he describes the kingdom of Messiah.

In the XLVth Psalm, which is one of those appointed to be used on Christmas day, the prophet, under the figure of the marriage of Solomon with his queen, celebrates the marriage of Messiah with his church; and in the Canticles, or Song of Solomon, the same idea is carried on at greater length.

When St. John was in the spirit, and saw the wonderful Revelation of the future state of the church, he “saw”—Rev. xxi. 1, 2.—“a new heaven, and a new earth—and the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” And, in the XXIIId chapter, the 16th and 17th verses, Jesus says, “I am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and the morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst, come: and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.”

SERMON XXXI.

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.—1 KINGS XI. 26.—XVII.

THE SEPARATION OF THE KINGDOM: REHOBOAM, JEROBOAM, AND OTHER KINGS—THE DISOBEDIENT PROPHET—REBUILDING OF JERICHO—ELIJAH—FED BY THE RAVENS—THE WIDOW OF ZAREPHATH.

1 KINGS xiii. 2, 3.

And he cried against the altar in the word of the Lord, and said, O altar, altar, thus saith the Lord; Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee.

And he gave a sign the same day, saying, This is the sign which the Lord hath spoken; Behold, the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out.

ON Sunday last, we considered the reign and character of Solomon, the account of which is given from the 12th verse of the II^d chapter of the 1st book of Kings, to the end of the XIth chapter, his magnificence, his wisdom, his building the temple, his fall into idolatry, God's determination to take a part of the kingdom from his successors, and the enemies he raised up against him,—his death, and *we hoped*, on, we trusted, sufficient ground, his repentance and final salvation, through Him of whom he was a type, the Prince of Peace and Lord of Glory.

Amongst those whom God stirred up against So-

lomon was Jeroboam, the son of Nebat and Zeruah of Zereda, in the tribe of Ephraim. Solomon, observing Jeroboam to be a bold and enterprising youth, had appointed him to levy the taxes from the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, and upon him did God fix as his instrument in dividing the kingdom. Ahijah, the prophet, being clothed in a new garment, found him, and he took his garment, and rent it into twelve pieces, of which he gave him ten, saying that was an emblem of what God intended to do; to take ten of the tribes from the successors of Solomon, and to give them to him. It is said, verse 32, of Solomon, "he shall have *one* tribe," that is Benjamin and Judah, which were so mixed, (Jerusalem standing partly in both of them, and Benjamin being very small,) that they were often considered but as *one* tribe. Jeroboam, however, instead of waiting God's time and direction, began to prepare the people for a revolt; and Solomon, hearing of it, sought to apprehend him, but Jeroboam fled into Egypt to king Shishak.

The XIIth chapter introduces us to Rehoboam, the son and successor of Solomon. It appears, from the book of Proverbs, (i. 8, 10, 15. ii. 1. iii. 1, 11, &c.,) that his father was at no small pains to teach him wisdom; but these instructions, (for want, perhaps, of being duly exemplified in the *life* of his father; or from some other failure on his part,) were not blessed of God; and the son of the wisest of men was remarkable for his folly. On the death of Solomon, being about 41 years of age, he repaired to Shechem, whither the Israelites had assembled to make him king, having previously sent for Jeroboam out of Egypt. They offered Rehoboam the crown,

upon condition that he would ease them of the hard service and expensive taxes which his father had laid upon them, to carry on his state and expensive buildings, especially in the multiplying of his wives and concubines and the idol temples. He took three days to deliberate upon the proposal, when his aged counsellors, who had served his father, advised him to give the people an obliging answer, and that he would, so, fix them in his interest. Being himself of a haughty and unyielding temper, and not approving this advice, he consulted with young counsellors who had been brought up with him. They advised him to tell the people, that he intended to load them with far more grievous burdens and to punish them far more severely than ever his father had done. The ten tribes provoked at this, cried out that they were under no obligation to, nor had any interest in, the family of David, and, so, would go home, and let Rehoboam and the family of David take care for themselves; and they made Jeroboam king over them. Rehoboam raised an army against them; but God, by his prophet Shemaiah, warned them not to fight against their brethren: to which warning they hearkened.

The foolish conduct of Rehoboam, in rejecting the wise advice of the counsellors of his father, and following the suggestions of the companions of his youthful follies, very forcibly brings to mind the *contrary* conduct of our present gracious sovereign, when he came into power. With his venerable parent, not dead, but deprived of the reason by which he had governed, wisdom and filial piety united to make him continue his counsellors:—it was, perhaps, a part of the design of Providence in

that afflictive dispensation, that *this* should be one of the effects. And, when, at length, the venerable parent sunk into his grave, the same wisdom and the same filial piety operated to their farther continuance: and, by the counsels of ministers, of whom it may be said, that many of them act truly from the fear of God, he has found his reward, in being the most illustrious of the monarchs of the earth.

God had promised Jeroboam to establish the kingdom to him and his seed, on condition that they should walk in the ways of David. But, instead of regarding these terms, and trusting that God would preserve to him what he had already given, he feared, that, if his subjects went up to the great feasts at Jerusalem, and worshipped and offered sacrifice in the temple, they would return to submission to the kings of the family of David, he set up two golden calves, or idols, the one at Bethel, in the southern part of his kingdom, and the other at Dan, in the north, and ordered his subjects, not to burden themselves with travelling to Jerusalem, but to worship the gods who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; and he built high-places, or temples, and made priests of the lowest of the people, and made the Levites flee out of his kingdom.

Thus was the true religion set aside from false political motives, or rather from a dislike to the true religion, and a love to the false. And is it not, thus, that *political reasons*, or *expediency*, are often urged with *us*, and we are called upon to countenance what is wrong, and give up what is right? It is, thus, we are called upon to give power to, and support, the papists, with their superstitions, their blasphemies and idolatries; and it is thus, we are told that we must *not* join in the great work, now carrying on, in

giving the Word of God to every nation under heaven, because *political reasons*, or *expediency*, are against our uniting with dissenters in any work however good.

The 15th day of the 7th month was appointed by God as the Israelites' Feast of Tabernacles. This Jeroboam did not keep, but appointed a feast a month later, at which he himself officiated as priest at Bethel, and offered sacrifices to the golden calf which he had set up.

It was at this time, as we read in the XIIIth chapter, the king himself officiating at the altar, as high priest, surrounded by the priests which he had made from the lowest of the people, and a vast concourse of Israelites attending, that a voice was heard crying out, "O altar, altar, thus saith the Lord, Behold a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon *thee* shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee."

And *who* could be thus hardy, to call out in this manner, under these circumstances? It was "a man of God," a prophet, who "came out of Judah by the word of the Lord." Did *he* thus cry out, he *alone*, amidst *thousands* of adversaries, and the power of the kingdom against him, and do the ministers of God, in these days, ever fear to reprove sin, and to declare the whole counsel of God? How many instances of men of God recorded in the Bible shall rise up in the judgment and condemn us.

"And it came to pass, when king Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, which had cried against the altar in Bethel, that he put forth his hand from the altar, saying, Lay hold on him. And his hand, which he put forth against him, dried up, so that he could not pull it in again unto him."

The prophet had, before, said, that he should give a sign, the same day, as a proof that he was commissioned by God, that “the altar should be rent, and the ashes that were upon it should be poured out.” And, as Jeroboam put out his hand against the prophet, his arm was struck stiff and withered, and “The altar also was rent, and the ashes” were “poured out from the altar.” The prophecy was exactly fulfilled, though not till about three hundred and sixty years after.

I must not dwell minutely on the particulars of this chapter, which you have just heard read, as the first lesson for this morning’s service. At Jeroboam’s request, the prophet, by prayer, procured the restoration of his arm, but refused his dinner and present, as the Lord, in token of his detestation of the place and the idolatry, had forbidden him to eat or drink in it, or to return by the way by which he came; but, by the wicked lies of a false prophet, he was seduced to return, and to eat and drink with him. To punish this disobedience, a lion, soon after, met him, and killed him, but eat not his body, nor slew the ass upon which he rode. None of these awful events made any impression upon the stony heart of Jeroboam. He proceeded to constrain his subjects to follow his idols, and so established that idolatry, which at last ruined the nation, and caused him to be for ever known as “Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, *who made Israel to sin.*” Nor did God forbear to punish him; his best subjects forsook his dominions, and retired into the kingdom of Judah; he had almost constant wars with the family of David, Rehoboam, and Abijam, in which he had five hundred thousand of his subjects cut off in one battle. We do not, in these days, it is true, see people estting

up golden calves, and building altars, and burning incense to them : but does not almost every one set up *idols* in his *own heart*, which estrange it from God, and which he serves as effectually as Jeroboam did his? And, when we are offering incense to them, does not the word of the Lord, and our own conscience call out distinctly, “O altar, altar, thus saith the Lord, Thou shalt be rent, and the ashes upon thee shall be poured out?” Most assuredly every idol-altar *shall* be *rent*, and the ashes of our sacrifices *shall* be *poured out*.

In the XIVth chapter, we read, that Abijah, Jeroboam's only pious son, being sick, Jeroboam, fearing to go himself, and being unwilling to be an example of consulting the prophets of the Lord, sent his wife, in disguise, to the prophet Ahijah, to know if he should recover. She was known by the prophet, though he was blind, and received an awful denunciation of death on her child, and of ruin on the whole family: and he who had been before told, ch. xi. 38, from God, by this same prophet, “if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in my ways, and do that is right in my sight, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did; that I will be with thee, and build thee a sure house, as I built for David, and I will give Israel unto thee:” is now told, that, because he has “made other gods” and “cast” the Lord “behind his back,” “Behold, I will bring evil upon the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam every male, and will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam, as a man taketh away dung, till it be all gone. Him that dieth of Jeroboam in the city shall the dogs eat, and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat: for the Lord hath spoken it.”

At the 20th verse of this chapter we read of the death of Jeroboam, and the remainder of the chapter gives an account of the wicked reign of Rehoboam, the fall of Judah into idolatry and abominations, of Shishak king of Egypt coming up against Jerusalem, and carrying away the treasures from the temple. The last verse records the death of Rehoboam.

In the XVth and XVIth chapters we have an account of Abijam's wicked reign in Judah, and of his being succeeded by Asa, who was a better king, and of Asa being succeeded by Jehoshaphat; while, in Israel, Jeroboam was succeeded by Nadab, Elah, Zimri, Tibni, Omri and Ahab. Of the reigns of these kings a longer account is given in the second book of Chronicles, the XIIIth, to the end of the XVIth chapter.

Solomon had said in his book of Proverbs, (xxviii. 2.) "For the transgression of a land many are the princes thereof:" and, here, we see Nadab reigning but for two years, Elah for about the same time, Zimri for but seven days, and Tibni and Omri contending for the crown.

When we read of these things, we ought to be thankful for the blessing of living under a monarchy in which the succession is fixed; and where our kings are obliged to rule,—not by their own arbitrary wills, the offspring of a corrupt nature, but according to the laws: for,—in the words of Cowper,—

— Violence can never longer sleep
Than human passions please. In every heart
Are sown the sparks that kindle fi'ry war;
Occasion needs but fan them, and they blaze;
TASK, B. v. l. 204.

In respect to *loyalty*, he says

We love

The king who loves the law, respects his bounds,
And reigns content within them : him we serve
Freely and with delight, who leaves us free.

TASK, B. v. l. 331.

We are told, at the 34th verse of the XVIth chapter, that, in the days of Ahab, “ did Hiel, the Bethelite, build Jericho ; he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram, his first born, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun.” The curse which Joshua spoke against any one who should rebuild Jericho, when he had destroyed it, is mentioned in the vith chapter of the Book of Joshua, the 26th verse ; and, here, we find, that, when Hiel rebuilt it as a seat of idolatrous worship, in contempt of this curse, and as an affront to Jehovah, his eldest son died when he laid the foundation, and his youngest when he had finished the gate ; and the rest suddenly while he was building ; perhaps, in the hurry of his work, he did not mind the hand of Providence ; or, if he did, these judgments, like those inflicted upon Pharaoh, only served the more to harden his heart, and make him persevere in his work. This was four hundred and sixty years after the curse, and should have taught the people to have believed God’s threatening, that he would root them out of the land, if they were rebellious and idolatrous.

In the XVIIth chapter, the first lesson at this evening’s service, we enter upon the history of Elijah. We have no account of his parentage ; his name signifies *my God Jehovah is he*. The Jewish rabbies connect the chapters thus : Ahab would not believe that the punishment of Hiel came from God ; but

attributed it to *chance*, and said, that the law that threatened idolatry, especially that in Deuteronomy xi. 17., was not to be regarded. Elijah, having prayed that God would punish this idolatrous people in some extraordinary manner, to bring them to repentance; and finding the prophetic impulse on his own mind, went to Ahab with this denunciation, declaring there should be no rain till they heard farther from him. This was an intimation, that, if they reformed, God would, upon his prayers, remove the calamity*.

It should seem, from chapter XVIII. 10., that Ahab had sought to put him to death; but, probably, not till the famine came; till then, he disregarded him. "And the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan; and it shall be that thou shalt drink of the brook," near which, probably, was a cave in which he concealed himself; "and I have commanded the *ravens* to feed thee there. So he went, and did according unto the word of the Lord;"—"and the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening."

The circumstance of Elijah being fed by *ravens* has excited the profane scoffs of unbelievers, as an incredible thing; and they have asked, Whence these unclean and ravenous birds could have procured food for the prophet? To get over this seeming difficulty some commentators have observed that the Hebrew word (*Orebim*) here translated *ravens*, signifies, likewise, the people of *Oreb*, and also the *Arabians*, and it is translated *Arabians* both in 2

* See Orton's Exposition, Vol. III. p. 391.

Chron. xxi. 16., and in Nehem. iv. 7., and that it was this people who were commanded by God to supply the prophet with food morning and evening*. But it does not seem at all necessary, or desirable, to have recourse to such an expedient. The God who created all things, and gave them their several dispositions, or natures, could, at any time, suspend, or alter, or direct them; as he did in respect to the animals which he brought to Noah in the ark, and when he used the lion as an instrument to slay the disobedient prophet, but prevented it devouring either him or the ass on which he rode. We may, likewise, think upon Daniel and the lions. As to *whence* they got the food, it might as well be asked, *Whence* came all the various animals used as instruments by God in the plagues of Egypt?—*Whence* came the manna, the quails and the water in the wilderness? *How* was the widow of Zarephath's barrel daily replenished with meal and her cruse with oil? *How* were the five barley loaves and the few small fishes multiplied, when *He* "for whose pleasure all things are and were created" fed thousands with them? As to *whence* it came, I should not have been less easy of belief, had the sacred writer said, that it came from the royal kitchen, or even from Jezebel's table †, (xviii. 19.) or from the sacrifices offered to Baal, Chemosh, Milcom, or Ashtoreth.

The brook Cherith, however, at length, after a year, dried up. He who had caused the stream to

* See Horne's Introduction, Vol. I. p. 664.—Professor Paxton, in his Illustrations of the Holy Scriptures, Vol. II. p. 44, gives very satisfactory reasons why the servitors of Elijah were not human beings, but ravens.

† Brown, in his Dictionary, art. Elijah, says "no doubt, they fetched" it "from some person's table."

flow in the wilderness could have made this brook to flow on, though every other stream in Judea had failed. But God had other means of subsistence in reserve for his prophet, "the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, Arise; get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon," (which was beyond the boundaries of Israel, and the place whence Jezebel, the wicked wife of Ahab, came,) "and dwell there; behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee. So he arose and went to Zarephath. And, when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman was there gathering of sticks." Is this the woman who is to maintain the prophet? Has she, who is so pressed, as to be obliged to go out of the city to gather sticks, wherewithal to spare for another? "He called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink." These, probably, were not all the words that passed. None other, however, are recorded. She assented, "And, as she was going to fetch it, he called to her and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand. And she said, As the Lord thy God liveth,"—she knew him probably to be an Israelite and a prophet by his dress,—"I have not a cake, but a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it and die." The prophet, then, should seem as little likely to be fed by the widow at Zarephath, as he was by the ravens at Cherith; would she forego her nature, and give of her last morsel from herself and her son? "And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go, and do as thou hast said: that is make for yourself and your son: but make *me* thereof a little cake *first*, and bring it unto me,

and, after, make for thee and for thy son; for thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth." Many, in such a case, would have scrupled to have done so. They would have said, "*How* shall this be? *Whence* can the meal and oil come? It is impossible. Such a thing was never known." She, however, on the faith of the Lord God of Israel, hesitated not. "And she went, and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and her house did eat many days," that is for two years.

The remainder of the chapter tells us of the sickness and death of the widow's son, her grief and complaining, and God's restoring him to life at the prayer of Elijah.

But I must hasten to a conclusion.

Many reflections of the greatest importance might be made on this history; but I must touch but briefly upon two only, the one made by St. James upon the efficacy of Elijah's prayers, the other upon the sovereignty of God's grace in his favour bestowed upon the widow of Zidon.

St. James, in his epistle, v. 19, says, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might *not* rain; and it rained *not* on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit."

Those who never pray and those who always sin cannot expect to be amongst the favoured of God, though, generally, "he sendeth his rain upon the unjust as well as upon the just." (Matt. v. 45.) But

many will say We pray, and our prayers are not answered. How is this? St. James will answer, in his ivth chapter, the 3d verse, “Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.” And, in the 8th to the 10th verse, he says, “Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.”

When our Lord preached in the synagogue at Nazareth, as mentioned in the ivth chapter of St. Luke's Gospel, he said, (verse 25, 26.) “I tell you of a truth, many widows were in *Israel*, in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; but unto none of *them* was Elias sent, save” or *but* “unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow.” The Jews who heard this were so much exasperated at it, as implying a preference of the Gentiles to them, that they thrust him out of the city, and would have thrown him headlong from the brow of a hill, or rock, had he not made his way from amongst them. Not that what he said was not true, but they could not bear the truth: it condemned them, and, instead of repenting, and turning to God, they shut their eyes and their hearts against truth and life. God is not an arbitrary and capricious being, who dispenses his favours without thought and without mercy; but all his acts are the result of perfect wisdom, of perfect goodness, and of perfect justice; but, when wickedness, or folly, questions, or complains, we

must remember what “he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” (Rom. ix. 15.) Even so, Lord, and grant that we ALL may be of the “remnant, according to the Election of Grace.” (Rom. xi. 5.)

SERMON XXXII.

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.—1 KINGS XVIII—XX.

AHAB AND ELIJAH AND THE PRIESTS OF BAAL—JEZEBEL—ELIJAH'S FLIGHT—GOD APPEARS TO ELIJAH—ELISHA—BENHADAD.

1 KINGS XIX. 11, 12.

And, behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks, before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and, after the wind, an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: and, after the earthquake, a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire; and, after the fire, a still small voice.

IN my last discourse, we considered the history of the illustrious prophet Elijah, in respect to his denouncing a want of rain and dew, and, consequently, a famine, upon Israel and the neighbouring countries, his being ordered by God to dwell by the brook Cherith, where he was fed, for about a year, by ravens, his removing thence to Zarephath, where he lived, for about two years, with a poor widow and her son, and whose small stock of meal and of oil was daily replenished by the peculiar miraculous hand of God: the death of the widow's son, and God restoring him to life at the earnest prayers of Elijah. These are the events recorded in the XVIIth chapter. We proceed now to the XVIIIth.

“ And it came to pass, after many days, that the

word of the Lord came to Elijah *in the third year*, saying, Go shew thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth." It is said, by our Lord, Luke iv. 25., and by St. James, in his Epistle, v. 17., that it was for "three years and six months" in which there was no rain. The expression, therefore, here, "in the third year," probably means of Elijah's flight from Ahab, which, probably, did not take place till some time after he pronounced his threat. Ahab might, at first, regard it as a mere empty boast; but, when he found after several weeks and months, that neither rain nor dew fell, and that scarcity and famine succeeded, then he thought seriously of it, and sought after Elijah, either to get him to recal it, and to procure rain, or put him to death.

The famine was so grievous, especially in Samaria, that all the cattle were dying for want of food; and Ahab, not caring to trust a matter of so much importance to other hands, ordered his steward Obadiah to go one way, while he went another, in search of food.

Now, it happened, that Ahab, though a very wicked man himself, had a steward, or governor of his house, who feared God—nay had feared him from his youth. It is not a little remarkable, that, however wicked men themselves may be, yet they find the advantage of employing pious servants. Thus, Laban was glad to employ Jacob,—Potiphar, and, afterwards, Pharaoh, to employ Joseph,—and, as we proceed in the history, we shall find how Nebuchadnezzar and Darius employed Daniel; and many other instances might be mentioned equally honourable to religion and its professors. Obadiah, though the steward of the wicked and idolatrous Ahab, yet, not only served the God of Israel himself, but he, likewise, at the

hazard of his life, protected his prophets ; and, when Jezebel sought to put them to death, he saved a hundred of them, by concealing them in two caves, and supplying them with food, though it was a time of famine. This was told to Ahab ; but he, restrained, either by personal respect and love, or by the immediate hand of God, allowed him to live, and continued him in his service.

As Obadiah was on his way, Elijah met him, and desired him to tell Ahab that he was there. When Ahab met him, he said, “ Art thou he that troubleth Israel ? ” Such are, generally, the accusations of wicked men against the servants of God. When sinners have forsaken God, and run into all kinds of wickedness, and brought themselves and others into trouble, their language is, “ Hast thou brought us here to perish in the wilderness ? ” — “ Art thou he that troubleth Israel ? ” But the answer of Elijah is applicable to all, “ *I have not troubled Israel ; but thou and thy father’s house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim.* ”

He challenged him, therefore, to call “ all Israel to mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred.” And, when they assembled, Elijah addressed them, “ How long halt ye between two opinions ? If the Lord be God, follow him ; but, if Baal, then follow him.” He proposes, then, that each party, (if *one* person may be called a *party*,) should make an altar, and put wood on it, and kill a bullock, and put it on ; and, that, whichever God answered by fire, that is whichever wood was kindled by fire from heaven, the God of that party should be considered as THE TRUE GOD, and deserving of all honour and

worship. The matter was now at issue, “all Israel,” that is *many*, a vast concourse from all parts of Israel, and Ahab and eight hundred and fifty priests, or prophets, were present on the part of Baal; and Elijah alone,—that is Elijah was the only one who dared openly avow himself,—on the part of God. The followers of Baal prayed and *propheesied*, that is sung songs, or hymns, to him, from morn, till noon, when the *sun*, that is *Baal*, was in his height and greatest force,—they danced round the altar, and cut themselves till the blood gushed out,—but to no avail:—whatever had been the custom before, whether, by the assistance of an evil spirit, fire had been procured, as if from heaven, or some fraud had been practised by the priests,—it was of no avail now, their fine *god* could not help them, and Elijah laughed them to scorn at the idea of *such a god*.

At length, at “the time of offering the evening sacrifice” at Jerusalem, or three o’clock in the afternoon, Elijah desired the people to draw near, and he repaired an altar of the Lord which had been broken down, and took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, and with them built an altar. In this was expressed a silent reproof to Ahab and his ten tribes, who were separated from Judah and from God, that Israel had been, and still ought to be, twelve tribes lying together as one people, and united in one worship to the Lord Jehovah. Alas! how different was it, *now*, to that time, when the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh, built their altar, or monument, (Joshua xxii. 10, &c.) on the east of Jordan, and their brethren on the west, fearing it was built for the purpose of worship, and might occasion separation and idolatry, would have marched

against them to have destroyed them : *now* the altars of the Lord are broken down, and altars erected to Baal in their stead.

Elijah orders a trench, or ditch, to be made round his altar, the wood and the sacrifice to be laid on it, and then water to be poured thereon, procured, probably, from the sea, which flowed at the foot of mount Carmel, and this was repeated twice, that is done three times. They might, thus, be assured, that no cheat was intended, that no fire was conveyed secretly under the wood. All being thus prepared, the prophet kneeled down in prayer. But *his* God was, neither busied in *talking* with others, nor in *pursuing*, nor in *a journey*, nor yet was he *asleep* and wanted *awakening* : his ears are ever open to the prayers of his faithful servants, though encompassed with the infirmities of man. The heavenly fire descended, and consumed the sacrifice, the wood, the stones, and the water in the trench. Who could doubt, now, *which* was God ! Baal, or JEHOVAH ? “ When all the people saw it, they fell on their faces, and they said, The Lord, he is the God ; the Lord, he is the God.” According to the law of God every idolater was to be put to death, so “ Elijah said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal ; let not one of them escape. And they took them : and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there :” again it might be said, as Deborah and Barak said of the host of Sisera, “ The river Kishon swept them away, that ancient river, the river Kishon. O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength.”

Elijah has again recourse to prayer, and rain is sent, and plenty again springs out of the earth.

“ Well, now, surely,” might some say, “ we shall

see that idolatry ceases in Israel, and that Ahab and Jezebel and all their people resort to Jerusalem three times in the year, and that the golden calves are thrown down, and Elijah is, ever after, retained near the persons of the king and the queen." Alas! they know little of human nature who suppose this, for we are told, in the XIXth chapter, that, when Ahab told Jezebel what Elijah had done, "Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more, also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to-morrow about this time." So far is she from turning to the Lord, and his prophet, and his worship, that she threatens the life of the prophet, perhaps with a full intention of killing him, or perhaps, of inducing him to fly away, and so, leave her and the king and people to themselves and their idolatries.

Well, the threat, of course, has no effect upon Elijah, unless it should be to make him come the more boldly forward, and denounce God's vengeance against her, if she forsakes not her iniquities.

Alas! Elijah, with all his boldness in standing single for Jehovah before the king, the eight hundred and fifty prophets and all Israel,—is still "a man of like infirmities." Either he had neglected to inquire of God, or God, for some reason, had withdrawn his grace; for, when he saw *that*, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beer-sheba, which belongeth to Judah," and where Ahab had no power. Still, however, not caring to trust himself there, he "went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree; and he requested for himself that he might die."

Yet, even here, and under these circumstances, God feeds him by an angel, and he proceeds "unto

Horeb, the mount of God," where the Great I AM first appeared to Moses, and whither Moses, afterwards, led the children of Israel, and where God delivered his commandments. "He came thither unto a cave, and lodged there." This was, probably, the cave, or "clift of the rock," mentioned Exodus xxxiii. 21, 22, where Moses was placed while the glory of Jehovah passed by him. Here Elijah seemed to give himself up to melancholy. "And, behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here Elijah?"

"What doest thou here?" is a question we should constantly propose to ourselves, and "so behave ourselves as to be able to answer in the sight of God what business we have in the places where we are." The pious Orton, in his reflections on this passage, says, "It was a just and gentle reproof; is this a time for good men, for prophets, to retire, when their service is so much needed? Let us often put the question to ourselves, What if we should hear God's voice saying to us when at alehouses, assemblies, or in bad company, working, or journeying on Sabbath days, What doest thou here? How should we answer it? Let us often say to ourselves, Does God call me to this? Am I in the way of duty? Can I be useful here? Is this my proper place? In such instances let us act with holy caution and fear, remembering that we are accountable to God*."

But to return to Elijah, "behold the word of the Lord came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here Elijah? And he said, I have been

* Orton, Vol. III. p. 408.

very jealous for the Lord of Hosts ; for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword ; and I, even I only, am left ; and they seek my life to take it away. And he said," that is the angel, for an angel, probably, delivered the word, " Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord. And, behold, the Lord passed by," there was the appearance of the *Shekinah*, or glory of the Lord, " and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord ; but the Lord was *not* in the wind : and, after the wind, an earthquake ; but the Lord was *not* in the earthquake : and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire : and, after the fire, *a still small voice.*"

According to the accounts we have of *volcanoes*, or the breaking out of fire from mountains, this appearance was the natural course on such occasions. There was a violent storm of wind, then an earthquake, and then fire broke out ; what we call *nature*, or the course of things, was suffered to do its office without interruption. When God appeared upon the mount to deliver the law, (Exod. xxiv. 17.) " the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount," like light and flame breaking out of the dark cloud. So was it here ; but God was more especially in *the still small voice* which followed this dreadful procession. This was intended to usher in the *Shekinah*, and prepare the prophet's mind for the instructions of the author of nature.

" And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold,

there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah?" repeating the former question; to which Elijah returned the same answer.

This order of the divine communication to Elijah may be a farther lesson to us in hearkening to the word of God. In any tremendous convulsion of nature, in the wind and tempest, in the earthquake, in the thunder and blaze of lightning, we are roused, alarmed, and think we hear the awful voice of God speaking aloud and threatening us; but the Lord is *not*,—or is not *peculiarly*—in these: we are to attend to him in *the still small voice*, in his word speaking to us in our *Bibles*, and in our *Consciences*, speaking *low*, but distinct. It is these which ask What doest thou? And to these, alas! how often do we reply only in self-justifyings and boastings.

But God has always some work for us to do for *him*. "And the Lord said unto him," after having thus shewn him his glory and his terrors and his power, and how he was competent to guard him in every danger, "Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and, when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria: and Jehu, the son of Nimshi, shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel, and Elisha, the son of Shaphat, of Abel-meholah, shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room. And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay: and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay."

God purposed by these to bring judgments on Ahab, Jezebel and Israel; Hazael in battle, Jehu in destroying Jezebel and the idolatrous priests, and Elisha by denouncing divine judgments, slaying the children, and, perhaps, bringing a famine, as we read of a grievous one, 2 Kings vi. 24, and following

verse. God concludes with these remarkable words, "Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him."

This was a reproof to him for having thought worse of Israel than they deserved, and for not having sought them out; and is a condemnation upon them, also, for not having come forward and declared for Jehovah. And it should be a lesson to *us*, especially to *ministers*, not to think worse of their people than they deserve, to seek them out, and encourage them in the service of the Lord. In short, ministers and people should mutually assist and support each other.

The remainder of this chapter, from the 19th verse, gives an account of Elijah's singling out Elisha, as a prophet, to succeed him. This was done while Elisha, a farmer, so opulent as to have his twelve yoke of oxen to plow with, was himself at plow. Such honour does God confer upon industry and piety wheresoever found, and so cheerfully did Elisha give up his worldly pursuits and riches to serve God.

In the XXth chapter we hear nothing of Elijah; he was, probably, seeking out some of the seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal, and was founding and teaching in some of the schools of the prophets. The events recorded in the chapter relate to Benhadad king of Syria besieging Samaria, and the consequences of it. Benhadad came with an immense army, having thirty-two kings as his assistants, and he demanded that Ahab should become tributary to him, to which Ahab assented; when Benhadad rose in his demands, and required that he should be permitted to send his servants, that they

might bring away whatsoever they thought proper from himself and his people. Ahab consulted with his elders what he should do, and they advised him to refuse it, when Benhadad, on being told of it, said boastingly that the dust of Samaria should not suffice for handfuls for all the people that followed him. That is, he would bring such an army as would destroy the whole city, and carry away the dust of it; so many soldiers, that there would be but an handful of dust for every one. The reply of the king of Israel (verse 11.) was of great wisdom, and worthy of being treasured up in the memory of every one, "Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off." That is, Triumph not before thou hast gained the victory, lest thou lose it, and expose thyself to shame and contempt. It was thus, when the Spaniards invaded England, in the time of Queen Elizabeth, and called their *Armada invincible*; but it was soon dispersed by the breath of heaven, and the instruments of torture with which the papists intended to persecute the protestants are now shewn as curiosities in the Tower of London.

God sent a prophet to Ahab to say that he would deliver Benhadad's army into his hands, and ordered him to send out the young men of the princes of the provinces, but two hundred and thirty-two in number, with the army to support them. They came to Benhadad's camp, when he and his assisting kings were drinking themselves drunk, and smote them with a great slaughter, and Benhadad escaped.

Benhadad supposed that the God of Israel was a God who had power only in one place, the *hills*, and that, if he fought in the *plain*, he would not be able to assist them. So, at the return of the year, that is

of spring, Benhadad went up with an immense army which “filled all the country,” while “the children of Israel pitched before them like two little flocks of kids.” The honour of God was concerned, “And there came a man of God, and spake unto the king of Israel, and said, Thus saith the Lord, Because the Syrians have said, The Lord is God of the hills, but he is not God of the vallies : therefore will I deliver this great multitude into thine hand, and ye shall know that I am the Lord. And they pitched one over against the other seven days. And so it was, that, in the seventh day, the battle was joined : and the children of Israel slew of the Syrians an hundred thousand footmen in one day. But the rest fled to Aphek, into the city ; and there a *wall* fell upon twenty and seven thousand of the men that were left.”

We are told that the Hebrew word here translated *a wall*, may likewise be translated *a burning wind*, what is called in those countries the *Simoom*. A traveller in Africa gives this account of this awful scourge of God : “At eleven o’clock, while we contemplated with great pleasure the rugged top of Chiggre, to which we were fast approaching, and where we were to solace ourselves with plenty of good water,”—“our guide cried out, with a loud voice, Fall upon your faces, for here is the Simoom. I saw from the south-east a haze come, in colour like the purple part of the rainbow, but not so compressed or thick. It did not occupy twenty yards in breadth, and was about twelve feet high from the ground. It was a kind of blush upon the air, and it moved very rapidly ; for I scarce could turn to fall upon the ground with my head to the northward, when I felt the heat of its current plainly upon my

face. We all lay flat on the ground, as if dead, till"—our guide "told us it was blown over. The meteor, or purple haze, which I saw was indeed passed, but the light air that blew was of heat to threaten suffocation. For my part, I found distinctly in my breast that I had imbibed a part of it; nor was I free from an asthmatic sensation" for nearly "two years afterwards." "Though the severity of this blast seems to have passed over them almost instantaneously, it continued to blow so as to exhaust them till" near "five in the afternoon, lasting through all its stages very near six hours, and leaving them in a state of the utmost despondency *." The mention of these dreadful scourges of God in other countries, besides illustrating Scripture, should tend to make *us* satisfied in our own country, and thankful to God for having placed us in it. To return, then, to Benhadad's army, of those who fled into the city a burning wind fell upon twenty-seven thousand and destroyed them: as was, probably, the case, afterwards, with Sennacherib's army, as mentioned 2 Kings xix.

Ahab, however, spared Benhadad,—as Saul had spared Agag before,—and made a treaty with him, for which God sent a prophet to reprove him, and to make him condemn himself, out of his own mouth, by means of a *parable*, as he had done, in the case of David and Uriah, by Nathan: "And he said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Because thou hast let go out of thy hand, a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people. And the king of Israel went to his house, heavy and displeased, and came to Samaria."

* Bruce's Travels, Vol. IV. p. 559. See also Encyc. Brit. art. Simoom.

Thus was Ahab's victory and joy turned into sorrow, because he had not fulfilled the command of God : and, thus, will all *our* successes but be so many occasions of heaviness and displeasure, unless we fulfil God's commands, and seek his honour and glory. Why is there so much vexation and disappointment and sorrow in the world, but because we follow our own inventions ? and, through sloth, or fear, or love to the enemies of God, spare those whom we should vanquish and destroy : we make treaties with our sins, when we should slay them. But of this we may be assured, that the *first* trouble is the *least*. Benhadad afterwards recovered strength, and there was fresh war between him and Israel, and Ahab at length paid for his neglect with his own forfeited life.

To conclude, then : Let us ever keep in mind what Jesus said unto his disciples : “ If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it : and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels ; and then shall he reward every man according to his works.” (Matt. xvi. 24—27.)

SERMON XXXIII.

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.—1 KINGS XXI, XXII.

AHAB AND NABOTH—JEHOSHAPHAT.

1 KINGS XXI. 17—19.

And the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, Arise go down to meet Ahab king of Israel which is in Samaria, behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to possess it, And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the Lord, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine.

THE course of the Commentary in which we are engaged confines us this day to the two chapters which are the first lessons at morning and at evening service, namely the XXIst and XXII^d chapters of the 1st book of Kings; but they afford abundant matter of awful consideration.

The XXIst chapter gives the history of Naboth and his vineyard, and the means taken by Ahab and Jezebel to deprive him of it. Naboth had a vineyard in Jezreel, where Jezebel lived, which was hard by the palace of Ahab. “And Ahab spake unto Naboth, saying, Give me thy vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs, because it is near unto mine house, and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it; or, if it seem good to thee, I will give thee the worth of it in money.” So far was, seemingly,

very fair on the part of Ahab. But “Naboth said to Ahab, The Lord forbid it me, that I should give” or part with “the inheritance of my fathers unto thee.” The law to which Naboth alludes is given in the XXVth chapter of the book of Leviticus, 23—28*; and, by this, it was not lawful to part with a patrimony from one family, or tribe, to another, except in a case of great poverty, when a man might sell, but not what we call *outright*, for it was to return to him again at the Jubilee. Now, Naboth, as he was not necessitous, so he considered, that, if he should part with his estate to gratify the king, it would be made part of the royal seat, and he should never recover it again. This was right, again, on the part of Naboth, and here the matter should have rested.

The wish, or desire, of Ahab for the vineyard, however, was not a mere simple innocent desire, which, when it finds it cannot be gratified lawfully, gives up, and rests satisfied. Ahab’s was *covetousness* of a stronger and more malignant nature, which works in the heart till it breaks out in some unlawful act. The *pride* of Ahab, too, was, probably, hurt. As a king, he was not used to *request*, much less to have his requests *denied*; and, in what we should call *a sulky mood*, he “came into his house heavy and displeased;”—“and he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread.” This attracted the notice of his wife, who inquired the cause, when Ahab informed her; but added the sin of falsehood to his other sins, by suppressing Naboth’s *reason* for not parting with it, founded on the law of God, and representing him as giving a blunt and churlish answer.

* See also Num. xxxvi. 6, 7.

When *woman* was created, she was formed as the *helpmate* of man, “a weaker vessel,” (1 Pet. iii. 7.) of a softer mould, to assist in carrying his designs into execution; not as the leader, the ruler, or the executioner: and, while she confines herself to her own proper department, all is well; but, when she usurps the place and office of a man, all is reversed; and confusion and mis-rule is the consequence. Woman, however, is sometimes called upon by God to discharge some of the more arduous duties of a man, as, when she is left a widow, and it becomes necessary that she should supply the place of a father, a master of a family and the manager of property: and, no doubt, we often see these important duties admirably performed: but this is, generally, in a very different manner to that, which, some wives, during the lives of their husbands, usurp the authority of the man. It has been remarked, that woman, in general, is more mild, virtuous and pious than man; but, that, when she errs from her proper path, she is worse, more daring, more depraved, more desperately wicked. How far this is *generally* true, it would require much reading and consideration to determine; but the instance now before us would, undoubtedly, be one of great weight in the balance against the female sex. Indeed, such was her character, that the name of *Jezebel* has passed into a by-word and a proverb, as expressive of all that is bad.

For “Jezebel his wife said unto him, Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? arise, and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry: I will *give* thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.” As much as to say, “Is it becoming thy dignity and power, as a king, to lay to heart the denial of a subject? Shew

thyself an absolute prince, and seize upon it by force: fear not, I will procure it for thee without its costing thee any money." Ahab wanted neither wickedness nor wit, but he was a mere novice to Jezebel, for "she wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed them with his seal," his signet on his ring, which could not be done without his consent; "and sent letters unto the elders, and to the nobles that were in his city, dwelling with Naboth,"—"saying, Proclaim a *fast*, and set Naboth on high among the people; and set two men, sons of Belial before him, to bear witness against him, saying, Thou didst blaspheme God and the king. And, then, carry him out, and stone him, that he may die."

Commentators seem generally to suppose that this *fast* was proclaimed in honour of the true God Jehovah. But it seems difficult to suppose, that Ahab and Jezebel, who worshipped Baal, should, thus, all at once, though to serve their own wicked purpose, pretend to vindicate the honour of Jehovah; and, therefore, most probably, this *fast* was proclaimed in honour of Baal, and what was called the blasphemy of Naboth, was merely him and his family refusing to give to Baal the honour due to the true God. But, be this as it may, whether it were to Baal, or to Jehovah, and they, thus, in this instance to serve their own wicked purpose, pretended a zeal for the true God, either was shocking, and it is difficult to say which was the most so. Both God and the king were joined in the accusation, because if he had blasphemed God only, he would merely have been put to death; but, if the king, likewise, the Jews say, his house, his goods, and his estate were forfeited to the king.

Jezebel found the elders and nobles ready to concur in her commands, the fast was proclaimed, and Naboth, together with his *sons*, it appears from 2 Kings ix. 26, was accused and stoned; and Jezebel went and informed Ahab, who went down (it appears, from 2 Kings ix. 25, with some state) to take possession of the vineyard.

There is much room for conjecture, as to what would, probably, be the thoughts and feelings of Ahab upon this occasion. Was it all satisfaction and joy, that he had obtained, and *that* without cost of land, or money, the vineyard which he had so much desired? Or were there some “compunctious visitings”—some whispers of conscience,—some stings—some suggestions that the robber must make restitution—that “blood will have blood?”—But, whatever was the state of Ahab’s mind on his journey, when he arrived at the wickedly-acquired vineyard of the murdered Naboth, who should he find there but “Elijah the Tishbite;” he who had brought a famine on the land for three years and six months, on account of Ahab’s sins, who had obtained fire and rain from heaven at his prayers, and had insisted that four hundred and fifty of Baal’s prophets should be put to death: he who had fled at the threat of Jezebel, and whom he had not seen since he attended upon his chariot, when he went down to Jezreel to await the reviving rain. Ahab’s *conscience*, now, rose up within him, and,—instead of saying “Have I found thee of whom Jezebel is in search to put thee to death?”—he said, “Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? And he answered, *I* have found *thee*: because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord.”—“Thus saith the Lord, Hast

thou killed, and, also, taken possession?"—"In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine."—"Behold, I will bring evil upon thee, and I will take away thy posterity,"—"and will make thine house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, for the provocation wherewith thou hast provoked me to anger, and made Israel to sin."—"The dogs," also, "shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel. Him that dieth of Ahab in the city the dogs shall eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat."

"Hast thou found me, O mine *enemy*?" Is the language of sinners in all ages to those who tell them of their sins, and who are, indeed, their greatest *friends*; who would that they should forsake their evil ways, and live to God here, and enjoy heaven and everlasting happiness with God and Christ in the world to come. But, tell a man he is going the broad way to hell, and shew him how to avoid it, and it is immediately, "O mine enemy." But, learn, my brethren, to know who are your *enemies*, and who are your *friends*. Those are your "enemies" who tell you that sin is not sin, who partake with you in your sins, who lead you into them, and who would persuade you that there is no hell for the wicked. You may learn a lesson even from the sinner Ahab, who, when he heard those denunciations from the mouth of the prophet, struck with terror, "he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly." Behold—the king of Israel! These are the fruits of sin. But, where is Jezebel? We hear *not* of her. Had there been any *good* to have told of

her, no doubt it would have been recorded. But, think not that robbery and murder are the only sins which require this self-abasement before God. All sin—and every transgression of any one of God's commandments is sin,—and requires humiliation and repentance before God. Yet how many are guilty of the sins of Ahab, robbery and murder, who, yet, perhaps, are not convinced of it! How many persons and families are plundered, how many are injured, nay brought to ruin and to death, by open violence and secret fraud!

“And the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days; but in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house.” Such are the happy fruits of repentance! Unhappily, however, the repentance of Ahab was not lasting and sincere. It proceeded from the fear of punishment, not from an abhorrence of sin, and from sorrow for having offended the great, the holy, the merciful God: it produced no reform, no restitution. Yet, even this was of some avail, and would have averted the punishment from Ahab to his wicked son, would he but have continued in the same frame of mind.

The XXII^d chapter begins with informing us, that Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, made a visit to the king of Israel. We learn, from the viith chapter of the 2^d Book of Kings, (verse 23, 26,) that Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, had married Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab. Ahab took this opportunity to ask Jehoshaphat to assist him in recovering Ramoth-gilead from the king of Syria, as he ought to

have given it up to him when he made peace with him; but Benhadad had neglected to do so. Jehoshaphat assented; but he wished to know, before he went, how far it was agreeable to the will of God, and desired Ahab to inquire accordingly. Ahab called together his prophets, four hundred in number, and asked them, whether he should go against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or whether he should forbear? "And they said, Go up, for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king."

Jehoshaphat, however, finding that Ahab had consulted with the prophets of his false gods, said, "Is there not here a prophet of the Lord besides, that we might enquire of him? And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may inquire of the Lord: but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil." Ahab's object was not to learn *the truth*, but to have that said which was agreeable to his wishes; and, because *the truth* was contrary to his *evil wishes*, he, therefore, hated it, and him that spoke it: *such* is the unregenerate heart in every age. But "Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so." Ahab and Jehoshaphat put on their royal robes, and sate in state, on thrones, in an open space, and the prophets were summoned before them. The messenger who went to fetch Micaiah from prison desired him to say as the other prophets did; but he, like a true prophet and faithful servant of God, said, "As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak." When arrived, Zedekiah, who seems to have been the chief of the false prophets, had made him horns of iron, and, holding them up, said, "Thus saith the Lord, With

these shalt thou push the Syrians, until thou have consumed them. And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, Go up to Ramoth-gilead and prosper, for the Lord shall deliver it into the king's hand." Micaiah was, now, called upon to speak, and he, just brought from prison, standing before two mighty kings, with four hundred false prophets opposed to him, and, probably, a great concourse of soldiers and citizens around, conscious that he was the servant of a greater King, and prophet of a higher God, *ridiculed* the king and the false prophets, in a strain of *irony*. By *irony* is meant a person speaking so, that, by his manner and tone of voice, it is evident, that he *means* the *contrary* of what his words alone would otherwise convey. He said "Go, and prosper: for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king," The king felt the *irony*, and adjured him to tell *the truth*; when he said, in sober earnestness, "I saw," that is *in vision*, or by the gift of foresight, "all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd: and the Lord said, These have no master, let them return every man to his house in peace:" a plain intimation that their master, or king, was to be slain.

Micaiah, then, proceeds to tell of *a vision* which he had had, in which he saw "the Lord on his throne, with the host of heaven around him, and he said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And one said, On *this* manner, and another said, On *that* manner. And there came forth a spirit and stood before the Lord, and said, I will persuade him. And the Lord said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.

And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail, also : Go forth, and do so."

We are not to consider this as a real representation of any thing done in the heavenly world, as if God was at a loss for expedients, or had any hand in the sins of his creatures ; but it is a parabolical, or dramatic representation—such as, perhaps, Ahab had often performed before him—to let him and his prophets know there was a higher King, that his providence was concerned about the affairs of this world, and that he has various ways of bringing about his purposes. A similar *scene* is supposed in the case of the trial of Job, i. 6—12., and again, perhaps, in the case of David's being moved to number the people, 2 Sam. xxiv. 1., 1 Chron. i. 21.

Micaiah was ill treated for his friendly warning, and remanded back to prison, and Ahab determined to persevere in his expedition against Ramoth-gilead ; and, what is still more surprising, even the good king Jehoshaphat, the worshipper of the true God, and who had inquired for one of *his* prophets, still perseveres in accompanying him. Perhaps he was *afraid* of Ahab, thus, in his kingdom, and surrounded by his people and guards, he did not dare to do contrary to what he saw to be the *determination* of Ahab. Thus does " the fear of man " bring " a snare," (Prov. xxix. 25.) ; and thus dangerous is it for good men to put themselves in the way of sinners : it is easier to keep entirely aloof from bad company, than to refuse to do as they do when we are in it.

Ahab, however, with the promise of his four hundred prophets on his side, did not dare to trust himself, as known to be the king, in the battle, and disguised himself, whilst he exposed Jehosha-

phat in his kingly robes, and which had nearly cost him his life. But what was the word of the prophets, or the disguise of Ahab against the purpose of God? "A certain man drew a bow, at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness." He who directed the stone from the sling of David to the forehead of Goliath, the only place not covered by his armour, now directs an arrow, shot "at a venture," to "between the joints" of his armour: he, probably, was completely cased, and the arrow could enter only in a sloping direction. Ahab "said unto the driver of his chariot, Turn thine hand, and carry me out of the host, for I am wounded. And the battle increased that day, and the king," being willing to give orders and animate his soldiers, "was stayed up in his chariot against the Syrians." The word of Micaiah was, now, hastening to its fulfilment; and Ahab had, now, time to think on Baal's altars, Benhadad's escape, the murder of Naboth and seizing of his vineyard, and of Micaiah's imprisonment: his agonies of body and of soul were, probably, dreadful. He "died at even: and the blood" had "ran out of the wound into the midst of the chariot. And there went a proclamation throughout the host, about the going down of the sun, saying, Every man to his city, and every man to his own country." The king of Syria, it appears, verse 31, had commanded his captains that had rule over his chariots to fight only with the king of Israel. That is to make it the great point to kill him; and, now, probably, hearing of Ahab's death, he was willing to draw off his army, and Jehoshaphat was willing to retreat. "So the king died, and was brought to Samaria; and they

buried the king in Samaria. And one washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria, and the dogs licked up his blood, (and they washed his armour,) according unto the word of the Lord which he spake.' (xxi. 19.)

Such was the wicked life and the miserable end of the idolatrous Ahab, the robber and the murderer.

Of Jehoshaphat, however, we are told, that he began to reign at the age of thirty-five, and reigned twenty-five years, "And he walked in all the ways of Asa, his father, he turned not aside from it, doing that which was right in the eyes of the Lord." (verse 43.) And those who were guilty of abominations he took out of the land. A more particular account of the reign of Jehoshaphat will be found in the 2d book of Chronicles, from the XVIIth, to the end of the XXth chapter.

In the best of human characters we find some *if*, or *but*. All have a leaven of the old Adam: None are perfect, few endeavour to be so. Yet we are commanded to "be perfect," (2 Cor. xiii. 11.) to be "perfect as our Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matt. v. 48.) It is said of Jehoshaphat, verse 43, *nevertheless* the high-places were not taken away; for the people offered and burnt incense yet in the high-places." God will have the whole heart, and the whole life, and it is for our happiness here, as well as hereafter, that it should be so. "There is no peace, saith my God to the wicked." (Isaiah xlviii. 22.) His service is perfect freedom. "The kingdom of God is"—"righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."—"He that"—"serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, and approved of men." (Rom. xiv. 17, 18.)

Give *us* grace, then, blessed Lord, that we may ever walk before thee with a perfect heart *here*, that, finally, through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, we may attain thy everlasting kingdom, where all is perfect, and where there is fulness of joy for evermore. Amen.

END OF VOL. I.

ERRATA.

The Reader is requested to make the following corrections with his pen, before
he reads the book.

VOLUME I.

Page xxiii. line 16 *for got put gat*

— xliv. — 16 and 17, *for Matt. 17 put Matt. i. 7.*

— 27 — 5 *before* could *insert* he said he

— 37 — 7 *after xxxiv. add 27*

— 97 — 4 from the bottom, Note. If our chronology, &c. scratch out the
remainder of the note

— 117 — 9 *after xx. add 10*

— 122 — 2 from bottom, *for Howell put Holwell*

— 153 — 15 Ditto. *before* our *insert* too many of

— 153 — 11 Ditto. *before* plays *insert* many

— 162 — 8 Ditto. *before* interest *insert* self-

— 239 — 11 *for xvi. put xv. 1—4*

— 248 — 4 *for Teberah put Taberah*

— 302 — 2 of text, *for knowest put knewest*

— 359 — 4 *for man put men*

— 390 — 11 from bottom, *after* consider *put* it

— — 5 Ditto. *for* lesson *put* lessons

— 434 — 10 *for xxvii. put xvii.*

— 463 — 5 put out the comma *after* Christ, and put one *after* was

— 487 — last *for* estting *put* setting

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